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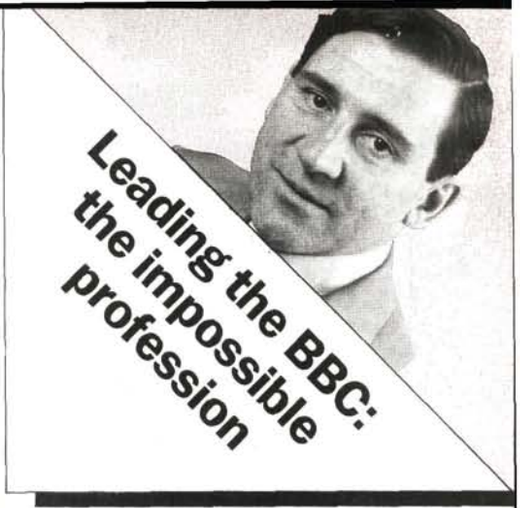

Leading the BBC: the impossible profession

THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR IN THE NIGHT

SECRET SOCIETY

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY

Over the past two weeks, the government has

- ordered police raids on the *New Statesman*, BBC Scotland HQ and the homes of three *NS* journalists
- seized the entire BBC2 Secret Society series tapes
- issued an injunction against Duncan Campbell
- banned MPs from viewing the spy satellite film in the House of Commons
- demanded that newspapers do not publish the spy satellite story

The Prime Minister has instituted a sustained and radical attack on the right of free enquiry and the freedom of the press.

(Cont. p3)

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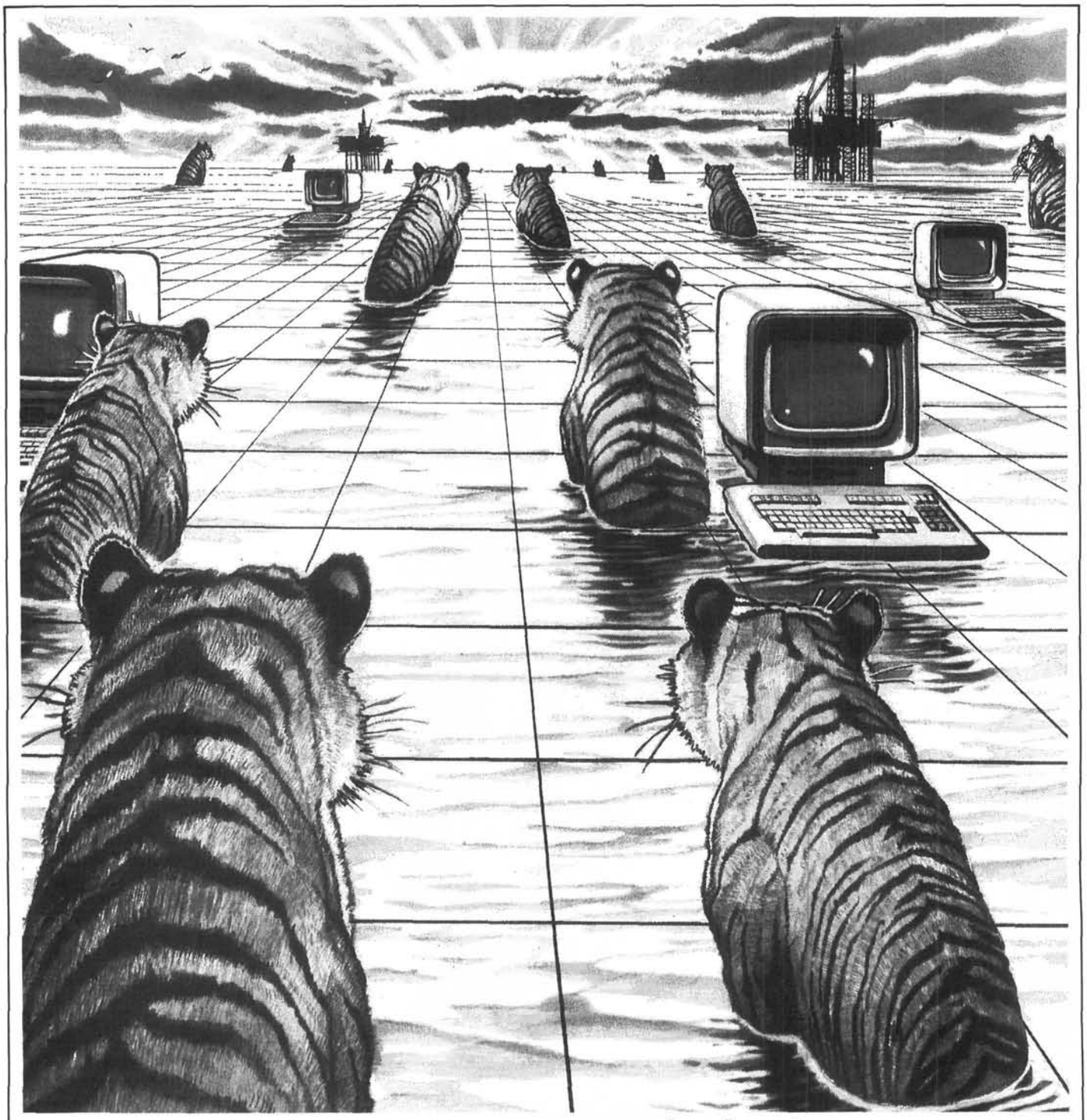

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 113 No 2915 6 February 1987

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NEXT WEEK

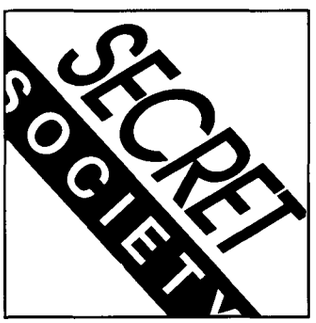
We have confirmed our reputation as a republican magazine by being thoroughly discourteous to the royal family: we have twice held over a clutch of acerbic pieces. Expect them next week, Knacker willing, plus Christopher Hitchens from Washington

The knock on the door

(cont. from front cover)

Why?

We need to be clear what is the object of the government's searches. The *New Statesman* printed, two weeks ago, an article about a spy satellite: written by Duncan Campbell, it was based on one of a series of six programmes about to be broadcast by BBC2, called *Secret Society*. The BBC's former Director General, Alasdair Milne, had decided, the week before, not to broadcast the film on national security grounds. Its clear primary objection was to point out that the satellite project, reckoned to cost some £500m, had been kept from Parliament. Little more detail was given on the satellite itself other than its name: the rest of the article was concerned with detailing how the agreement between the government and the parliamentary public accounts committee appeared to have been breached, and with describing the spy satellite system presently in existence.



The other programmes in the series, now in police hands, were concerned with issues which cannot, on any definition, fall under the heading of national security. They were investigations into the misuse of computer-stored data; expensive blunders by successive governments on radar defences; attempts by successive governments to block a freedom of information bill; the growing powers of the Association of Chief Police Officers; and government powers in the event of a nuclear emergency. The transmission of these programmes would, to be sure, *embarrass* the government: but is that now to be taken to be sufficient cause for censorship?

We must take it that it is. During the police search of the *NS* itself nearly two weeks ago, the scripts of all six of the *Secret Society* series were seized. After a few days — again, on a Saturday night, when Parliament was not sitting and legal advice is more difficult to obtain — the BBC's Scottish offices were raided. The police took away three van loads of material under a warrant granting them the widest of powers: included in the haul were tapes of the complete series.

At some point between the *NS* and the BBC raids, a decision must have been made, whether at police level or above, to net programmes whose contents they must have known betrayed no secrets to an enemy, but merely imparted information to a public which had been deprived of it, in some cases for decades while the projects under question were bungled, covered up and lied about. It was the kind of action over which this government would have — rightly — complained had it happened in, say, Poland. *But it happened here.*

Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, repeated again and again during the Commons debate on Tuesday that the police were doing no other than pursuing a grave breach of national security. He cannot answer the question: what breach of national security is made in the five other films in the *Secret Society* films?

Throughout this affair, the prime political motive of the government has been to represent the left as being disloyal because it has been from the left that these disclosures have come. The vilification of Duncan Campbell himself, and of the BBC for employing him, has been raucously loud on the Tory benches and in many newspapers: a little less loud have been the charges against the *New Statesman* and now against the BBC.

The clear message — explicitly so in many cases — is that free enquiry should not be tolerated: that a government's definition of national security should be taken on face value; that journalists who have a history of embarrassing governments by their disclosure should, in effect, be blacklisted. It has been an ugly sound from the government and their supporters, the uglier because this government and its supporters in the press have made great play of being a new kind of Conservative, of being libertarian, anti-statists, let-it-all-hang-out Conservatives. Gerald Kaufman, the Shadow Home Secretary, was right in this: 'Duncan Campbell has a reputation for being troublesome: that is the mark of an independent journalist'.

But in mounting this attack, the government has had, implicitly, to concede a point of the first importance. In tarring the left with the smear (as it evidently considers it to be) of disclosing information, it has betrayed the enmity with which the right views disclosure. The reaction on the right has been a profoundly anti-democratic one: that the public should *not* know what governments do or spend in their name, that the press should *not* function as a conduit of information on the vital issues of the day.

That gives the left a large opportunity: it can now become the occupier of ground explicitly evacuated by government. It becomes the guardian of a basic freedom — the right to be informed. It should wear the smear with pride: yes, it does want fewer secrets: yes, it does want more disclosure: yes, it will try to ensure that more that is hidden does get into the public arena. If the accusation of the Prime Minister, and of the government, is that we have treated, and will continue to treat, our fellow citizens as adults, then yes, we should plead guilty. □

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CARROT & CORIANDER DIARY

Saturday, 24 January, 6.45 pm approx:
'We weren't expecting visitors. I was lounging around in my woolly caftan, complete with fluffy bedroom slippers, and was just putting the finishing touches to a new carrot and coriander soup. Alan had gone down to the off-licence to get a bottle of brandy. I had Gershwin on the record player . . . A cozy NW3 domestic scene.

'With all the thunder of Gershwin I couldn't have heard the front doorbell. Alan returned from the off-licence to find three police officers roaming around our entrance-hall asking for "Mrs Hurst". He called to me from the top of the stairs that there were three police officers who wanted to see me. I went upstairs, to be greeted by two men (the one heading the investigation and the thuggy-looking, cloth-capped one) and a woman.

'They asked if I was Mrs Hurst. I said yes. They asked if I "still worked for the *New Statesman*". I said yes, I was proud to say that I did. They flashed a brown envelope at me which contained the search warrant to search the *NS* and asked me to accompany them to Farringdon Lane. I said I wished to ring the editor, then proceeded to fumble through the phone directory as I didn't have John's number at home, finally made contact with him and the rest is history . . .'

○

This week's is a Diary by many hands. Joanne Hurst, our production manager and the *NS*'s registered office key-holder, was the first to hear the knock in the night, as she went about her lawful occasion of making coriander soup. Eastern Europeans are always making jokes about their secret police: the fear they arouse is shot through with grotesque comedy. The plods turned over *everything* in the *NS* offices. This brought them to Jane Thomas, editorial assistant and, among umpteen occupations, *This England* editor:

'"During our search of this floor last Saturday, Madam, we noticed a computer disk towards the back of your bottom drawer. I must now ask you to hand it to me." The hawk-eyed SB man was accompanied by the *NS* solicitor to see fair play. I'd quite forgotten that Duncan once tried to teach all the editorial staff how to use the new technology he still hopes will revolutionise our lives.

'Each of us was provided with a floppy disk, but being very inept, I'd never made use of mine. I explained it was blank. The SB computer expert's eyes lit up: this woman was obviously concealing the clue for which they'd searched to no avail for three days. "This tape is blank," he said accusingly as he handed it back three minutes later. Since we were all being very polite to each other, I didn't say "I told you so." "What did you think of the 'satellite' film?" I asked detective inspector Jim Williams. "Oh, we're not allowed to see it," he replied, "that's why this search is so difficult."

'Any normal person would open a file and scan each sheet turning it face down before adding the next thus ending up with the file in the same order as before. Their method was the opposite, so all our files now run back to front, especially infuriating with the wire basket of *This England* entries, kept for a year in strictly date order.'

○

The trawl of *NS* staff papers yielded, of course, the friendly correspondence between Attorney-General Sir Michael Havers and Duncan Campbell — a huge embarrassment for Special Branch's superiors. It will also have yielded, from associate editor Andrew Lumsden's unpublished and legally unpublishable notes, the name of the senior Conservative politician said to have been arrested last year on suspicion of 'gross indecency' with another man and let off with a caution. So if Special Branch didn't have the detail they've got it now.

○

Writer Jolyon Jenkins (who worked on the 'satellite' programme) had his home searched: 'I was on holiday at the time. I went to the offices of the English language *Bangkok Post*, and presented myself as a very important journalist from Britain. "You seem to have annoyed Mrs Thatcher," said the editor lightly, and kindly let me read through all the Reuters, UPI and API reports they'd received on the story. From then on I spent most of my time plugged into the World Service — never have I been so well informed about moves in the Politburo, the Chinese communist party and Filipino politics — until I heard what I'd been dreading: "and the houses of two other journalists have also been raided". An exorbitantly expensive phone call from the River Kwai Hotel, Kanchanaburi, confirmed that one of them was me.

'My landlord, I discovered on my return, had treated the affair with remarkable sang froid. Four detectives had spent several hours taking the flat apart, removing the dust jackets of my books and reading every piece of paper I have. Now they know about every lover (OK, not *that* many), every bank manager's threat. But they left the place tidier than they'd found it. For the first time since I left the parental home, someone had *folded up my pyjamas*.'

○

Senior political writer Sarah Benton scooted off to the Commons for that 27 January debate when the Parliamentary banning of the satellite film was referred to the Committee of Privileges on Tony Benn's motion. Never did a fresher, a more 'extra-Parliamentary' eye, fall amazed on the ways of the Chamber:

'By the end of the day, we were reduced to standing in a corner, lest we should be found sitting when the Speaker chose to sweep by, his black tails held gingerly aloft by two retainers, or found sitting in "someone else's seat", in an empty press gallery, or accidentally masquerading as a terrorist by walking down the wrong corridor.'

After this welcome from the mother of Parliaments, Sarah at last managed to exercise her freedom to gaze down at the people's tribunes. Such is the school uniform that she found it next to impossible to tell one man from another. There may be nothing else to be said in favour of Tony Marlow, Tory MP for Northampton North, but at least 'sticking out from *his* conventional dark suit were twinkly little yellow shoes. This is of great value to us newcomers peering down from the press gallery trying to distinguish, from the sprawled ranks of middle-aged chaps in suits of identically cut dark cloth, which of them is actually on his feet speaking.'

Without abandoning a jot of her other views of Margaret Thatcher, Sarah received a revelation about Mrs T *within* the Commons: 'to look down on this almost all-male enclosure and notice this small female figure, passing the time doing her ankle exercises or admiring the polish on her shoes, is to grasp the measure of her career achievement.'

○

And so to Duncan and Patrick: 'One of the enduring memories of the SB's sojourn at *NS* for us will be the strenuous attempts on both sides to maintain the fiction that we were present at a slightly awkward social occasion. As part of this fiction JOKES were told. The Special Branch's contribution went thus. One of them had been guarding Gorbachev on his last visit, his opposite number a KGB man. They were positioned on some outcrop of Whitehall, awaiting the arrival of our own dear Foreign Secretary. The Russian, restive, asked when Sir Geoffrey was finally going to turn up. Quick as a flash the SB pulled out his comb, and spoke furiously into it. The KGB watched aghast at this display of Western technological superiority. His consultations over, the SB man turned to his Sovet friend, and informed him that Sir Geoff was due any moment. Sure enough . . .'
To be, we fear, continued . . .

ROGER WODDIS

Gissa job

Dear Mr Hussey (sorry — 'Duke'),
About this job that's up for grabs,
I've got the necessary quallies,
You can forget the other wallies.
Jeremy? No, he'd cock a snook.
Nix Paul the Fox and Brian the Lion,
John Tusa-Friendly ran a journal,
But now he's with the life external.

To tell the truth, Your Governorship,
The horse you want between the reins
Is one that likes a softer going,
That knows which way the wind is blowing
And functions best beneath the whip.
I'd work long hours, I'm short on brains,
And don't care much for Dennis Potter
(Frankly, I think the man's a rotter).

So, in a word, I'm just the chap
You're looking for to be DG.
I couldn't manage, still less edit,
But what I *do* have to my credit
Is that I don't mind watching crap.
I'd love to run the BBC,
I'm all for secrecy and doorknock,
And no one pulls a keener forelock.

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Splitting on the atom

THE LABOUR Party will aim to close all Britain's ageing Magnox reactors during its first full term of office, according to a policy document currently being finalised by the party's energy spokesperson, Stan Orme MP. However, no timetable has been set for the closure ofthe second generation Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors (AGRS) and no mention is made of Thorp, the controversial new reprocessing plant being built at Sellafield in Cumbria.

The team of expert energy advisers convened by Orme (*NS* 9 January) had a final meeting two weeks ago to discuss suggested changes to a 50-page draft paper covering all aspects of energy policy. According to a number of those present, nuclear power was easily the most contentious issue, with Ted Rowlands, one of Labour's junior energy spokespersons, taking a strongly pro-nuclear line.

No decision has yet been taken on when and how the paper, which outlines possible policies for two parliaments, might be published. But it is hoped that it will form the basis of action in the event of Labour coming to power.

The Magnox closure programme, which goes significantly further than the National Executive Committee statement agreed by last year's conference, is qualified by the need to keep it 'under review' in the light of electricity demand trends. Although a similar programme for closing AGRs is explicitly rejected, there is a new commitment to invest in coal capacity so as to lay the foundations for the 'eventual closure' of the AGRs.

Any policy on Thorp has apparently been left out because of a decision that, as a waste treatment plant, it is an environment responsibility. This means, of course, that it comes under Labour's environment spokesperson and Sellafield MP, Dr Jack Cunningham. He will have to make sense of the current, rather bizarre, intention of completing Thorp but using it for something other than its original purpose.

It is unclear what policy will be suggested with regard to the two new AGRs at Torness in East Lothian and at Heysham near Lancaster. If recent reports that their commissioning has been delayed for at least six months due to fuel problems are correct, they may not have started up by the time of the next general election.

Labour's existing policy, if Torness and Heysham are not already on line, is not to fuel them up. Unfortunately, it is also argued that their electricity would make it easier to phase out the Magnox stations within four or five years. One bet is that this very awkward dilemma will be resolved in the usual manner. It will simply be ignored.

Rob Edwards

The full Stop

Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA's civilian and military courts are overwhelmed by last-minute efforts to indict more than 600 military officers before a new law preventing such proceedings in future takes effect on 22 February. The accused face charges of kidnapping, torture, and murder relating to their involvement in the infamous 'Dirty War', the campaign of state-sponsored terrorism directed against leftist guerrillas and their sympathisers during the late '70s.

Argentine President Raoul Alfonsin claims his new *Punto Final* (Full Stop) law must put an end to the 'interminable suspicion' hanging over hundreds of army and naval officers under investigation for serious human rights offences.

The Radical Party government, which pushed the law through the Congress in late December, argues that the men who authorised the abduction and subsequent execution of some 11,000 people in their bid to create an international Catholic alliance against communist subversion have now been punished. General Ramon Camps, the notorious police chief of Buenos Aires province, was given a life sentence in November 1986. Others such as Admiral Emilio Massera, who ran the military's principal torture centre at the deceptively gracious Navy Mechanics School (ESMA) in Buenos Aires, and General Jorge Videla, the former leader of the junta, both received life sentences for their crimes in April 1985.

President Alfonsin now believes that those who merely followed orders should not be punished in the name of national reconciliation. However, the broad coalition of human rights groups which sprang to life with the return to democratic government in 1983 disagree. The groups have swamped the courts with indictments against junior and middle-ranking officers identified in sworn testimony before the presidential Commission on the Disappeared (CONADEP) as practitioners of the black art of counter-subversion.

On the political front, reaction to the *Punto Final* has been one of furious indignation. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who first drew international attention to the fate of 'the disappeared' by their weekly demonstrations in the capital, have condemned the government for making 'obscene concessions' to the generals. The President of the Federal Appeals Court, Guillermo Ledesma, has resigned in protest. Even CONADEP, which was personally appointed by President Alfonsin to investigate the disappearances and bring the guilty to book, has published a bitter statement in which it accuses Alfonsin of moral duplicity. In pungent reference to the ongoing pursuit of Nazi war criminals the Commission asks why it is necessary to grant amnesty to Argentina's dirty warriors when West Germany and other European countries continue to prosecute those responsible for war crimes committed over 40 years ago.

While human rights groups and their supporters demonstrate against the *Punto Final* in the streets of Buenos Aires and regional cities, private individuals like Renée Epelbaum, a 62-year-old

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widow who lost three teenage children to military kidnappers in 1976, find the prospect of an amnesty for the killers of their loved ones devestating. Mrs Epelbaum lives for the day when the men connected with the abduction and later killing of her children at the Navy Mechanics School are put on trial. 'This law is only for the benefit of the military,' she says. 'A crime is a crime and justice must punish those people who commit crimes against humanity.'

Rogmar Hagelin, the Swedish businessman whose 17-year-old daughter, Dagmas, was abducted in 1977 by one of Argentina's most hated military figures – Lieutenant Alfredo Astiz, the so-called 'Angel of Death' – also feels betrayed. Astiz, a graduate in counter-subversion from the US School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone, used his torture skills on many young women like Dagmar at the Mechanics School. It is claimed by some of his surviving victims that his real passion was for the use of the '*picana*', an electric cattle prod, on pregnant women.

Hagelin has spent the past ten years campaigning to get the 'Angel of Death' convicted and imprisoned without success. Although two civilian courts considered the case against Astiz proven, a superior military court acquitted him, a verdict subseqently upheld by the Federal Appeals Court in December 1986.

For Hagelin the *Punto Final* is the embodiment of all his frustration and disappointment. As an unreprentant Alfredo Astiz takes in the summer sun at the beach resort of Mar del Plata and boasts that he would repeat his Dirty War exploits if given the chance again, a plainly despondent Rogmar Hagelin talks about leaving Argentina to return to Sweden. 'How can I stay another day in a country where there is justice only for military people?'

Phillip Hay

If the caption fits

No 4

Our new weekly competition has suffered a setback *nobody* could have foreseen — at least *we* didn't. The winning caption for picture no 2 has been held over because its subject, Terry Waite, has been unavoidably detained. No jokes on *that* for the moment. Meanwhile, the head of the secret services stunting to camera, and no doubt on holiday at the time (above). Captions or bubbles for her to reach us by Tuesday 17 February; the best will be published in the issue of 20 February and a small fee (£10 Book Token) paid.

No home for Stalin

FOR THE FIRST time in more than 20 years, anti-Stalinism is becoming a major factor in official Soviet politics. Khrushchev's explicit, if limited, criticism was replaced after his deposition in 1964 by Brezhnev's glorification of Soviet achievements. But since 1985, as Gorbachev's own reform proposals have grown bolder, so too have sanctioned voices critical of the Stalinist era.

Many representative figures of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation 'thaw' are now playing leading roles in Gorbachev's liberalisation of cultural and intellectual life. Among them are writers Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Andrei Voznesensky, Vladimir Lakshin, Bulat Okudzhava, and Mikhail Shatrov. Well-known anti-Stalinists have even assumed influential posts under Gorbachev, including Sergei Zalygin and Grigory Baklanov, the new editors respectively of the journals *Novy Mir* and *Znamya*. In December, in a rare public reference to the unfinished de-Stalinsation of the Khrushchev years, Shatrov revealed the outlook of this important cohort: 'Today, history is giving us one more chance.'

Literary works already published or scheduled for this year include three novels, banned for 20 years, by major established writers: Anatoly Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, a remembrance of the encroaching terror of the 1930s; Vladimir Dudintsev's *White Robes*, an account of the repressions in science in the late 1940s; and Aleksandr Bek's *The New Appointment*, a portrayal of moral corruption in the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The same development is evident in the theatre and the cinema. Enormously popular plays, such as Shatrov's *'Dictatorship of Conscience'* and A. Buraksy's *'Speak Out . . . !'* are assailing various aspects of Stalin's legacy. Several anti-Stalinist films, notably Aleksei German's *'Roadchecks'* and *'My Friend Ivan Lapshin'*, have already been released, and Tengiz Abuladze's *'Repentance'*, the first Soviet film to give a full-scale portrayal of Stalin's terror, is showing in Soviet Georgia and is scheduled soon for national release.

Much of this cultural anti-Stalinism remains elliptical, not mentioning the dictator by name; but its collective impact should not be underestimated. Moreover, if such works continue to appear, they will be widely reviewed and thus provoke a larger and more explicit discussion of the Stalin era. Nor is the new anti-Stalinism narrowly cultural. Similar trends are under way among official economists, sociologists, political scientists and even historians, one of the most censored and timid Soviet professions.

How is this resurgent anti-Stalinism, dismissed by some Western scholars as a spent force, to be explained? Part of the answer is the magnitude of Stalinist crimes, which claimed tens of millions of victims. Until those atrocities are fully acknowledged and discussed, they will remain an intensely contemporary issue for many Soviet citizens. As a result, Gorbachev's 'openness' campaign cannot easily be limited to current problems. 'A society that wants truth and openness', as Rybakov and other intellectuals have said, 'must be truthful and open about its past.'

Above all, anti-Stalinism is the unavoidable corollary of Gorbachev's increasingly radical calls for reform. Despite important changes under Khrushchev, the underpinning institutions of the Soviet system are still those created by Stalin in the traumatic 1930s. Therefore, Gorbachev's various proposals to reduce the state's economic monopoly in favour of partial privatisation and marketisation, and to curtail central bureaucratic control in favour of individual initiative in other areas of life, bring him into fundamental conflict with Stalin's legacy.

In recent months, Gorbachev supporters have been remarkably explicit in linking the failures of the existing system to the Stalinist experience. Their complaints focus on a 'bureaucratic labyrinth' that imposes a 'complex of prohibitions' on society and treats everyone like a 'cog'. Recalling that the bureaucratic system took shape in the 1930s amid, as one critic wrote, 'bloody terror and mute submission', they call for the abolition of 'obsolete forms and methods that emerged 50 years ago'. Not surprisingly, many also find a relevant alternative in the far more liberal, marketised Soviet system of the 1920s, known as NEP, arguing that by destroying it in 1929 Stalin betrayed Lenin's legacy.

Anti-Stalinism can help Gorbachev undermine dogmas, legitimise change and attract idealistic supporters. But it is also a dangerous issue because it calls into question Stalinist pillars of the Soviet system, such as the collectivised agriculture imposed in 1929-33, and because, as Gorbachev and other officials admit, it still arouses deep divisions in officialdom and in society. Though Gorbachev clearly stands behind the new anti-Stalinism, he has remained silent about the Stalinist past. When he finally speaks on this crucial subject, it will reveal much about his commitment to far-reaching change and about the forces that oppose it.

Stephen F. Cohen

Stephen Cohen is Professor of Politics at Princeton.

No heresy here

'OUR UNITY of principle and purpose', said Liberal leader David Steel, 'is complete and indivisible.' He was speaking at Saturday's Alliance jamboree at the Barbican Centre where, behind the scenes, there were frantic machinations to preserve the appearance of harmony.

Liberal Party National Executive member Stella Cairns was having a spot of bother at the door. Security guards refused her entry — because she was wearing a CND badge. They had orders, they said, to stop anyone openly sporting such heretical signs. Cairns eventually persuaded them she was rather important in the party and, according to Liberal CND treasurer Martin Powell, managed to get the orders changed.

Liberal CND, however, was still prevented from distributing leaflets 'although other groups were allowed to unhindered', said Powell. They were also prevented from bringing their banner into the auditorium. Simon Lewis, SDP head of communications and one of the launch organisers, said he 'certainly didn't give such orders'. 'In any case', he added rather unfairly, 'most security men wouldn't know a CND badge if they saw one.' The banner business was, he said, to prevent a fire risk.

Jane Dibblin

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PETER KELLNER

Civil liberties: overcoming the SEJ factor

THIS FRIDAY MPs debate the Human Rights Bill, a private member's bill introduced by Sir Edward Gardner, a Conservative MP. If it is eventually passed into law it could give us one of the most giant gains for our civil liberties this century.

For most people most of the time — even, dare one suggest it, *NS* readers — eyes glaze over at the mention of human rights and civil liberties. As with Northern Ireland and nuclear power many of our fellow citizens have a vague sense that things should be other than they are; but on the whole the SEJ factor dominates: it's Someone Else's Job to sort it out.

Even at Westminster MPs are far from immune from the SEJ factor. They have to pretend to all and sundry that they are seized of every detail of every topical matter. It would not look good if the MP for Lymeswold West were to reply to a concerned constituent that he couldn't give two figs about Sizewell, hadn't read the Layfield report and what's more had no intention of doing so.

Equally with civil liberties. No MP dare admit indifference. Yet this Friday the acid test of their devotion to civil liberties will be conducted, in full view of the tellers. Those MPs who really care will march into the lobbies with Sir Edward. Those who don't will vote against or stay away. (And none of the nonsense, please, about pressing constituency engagements for out-of-London MPs. The date of this Friday's debate has been known for weeks. MPs have had plenty of time to rearrange their diaries.)

Sir Edward's bill is deceptively simple. It proposes to incorporate into British law the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. For the past 20 years individuals have been able to take their cases to the European Court in Strasbourg. Some celebrated cases have been won there, when it has been found that British law has conflicted with the European Convention. One of the most notable was the victory of the *Sunday Times*, in the days when it was a proper newspaper, in winning the right to publish its story about Distillers' role in the thalidomide scandal.

What nobody has been able to do is to secure their rights under the convention in a *British* court. For anyone who thought that a narrow or academic point, the events of last weekend have surely proved otherwise.

LET US IMAGINE that Sir Edward's bill was already on the statute book. The Special Branch arrive at the BBC's Scottish headquarters in Glasgow. They produce their warrant in conformity with the Official Secrets Act and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Under the Human Rights Act the BBC's lawyers would be able to test the warrant in a far more fundamental way than they were able to do last Saturday.

Article Ten of the convention states that

> Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers . . .

Last weekend's raid on the BBC violated its right both to receive and impart information. By removing files indiscriminately the Special Branch put legitimate journalistic inquiry at hazard. By removing the transmission copies of *all* of Duncan Campbell's films (and not just the one on the Zircon project), it violated the BBC's right to impart information.

Suppose the BBC's lawyers had armed themselves with this article of the convention and sought an injunction to restrain the Special Branch from proceeding with their search. The lawyers working for the security services would presumably have based their claim to continue the search on paragraph two of Article Ten:

> The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety . . .

'The interests of national security': upon those five words would the state seek to uphold its right to raid offices at weekends, wake up film technicians in the middle of the night and take away boxloads of films and papers. Doubtless the security services' lawyers would argue that the mere statement that 'the interests of national security' were at stake should be sufficient: it would be unnecessary to *prove* that national security were in jeopardy.

> ***'Governments do what they think they can get away with. They hesitate when they think they may be foiled'***

But wait. Article Ten does not leave the concept of 'national security' unqualified. It refers to 'formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law *and are necessary in a democratic society*' (emphasis added). In other words, it is not enough for the state to say 'national security is at stake', or even 'national security is at stake and we've got the Official Secrets Act to back us up, m'lud'. A judge, hearing the BBC's application for an injunction against the Special Branch, would have to be satisfied that the violation of human rights indicated by the warrant was based on rules that were 'necessary in a democratic society'.

If the BBC were to have fought last Saturday's warrant on those grounds under a Human Rights Act, a judge would have had three options. He could have held an immediate hearing and found for the Special Branch; or held an immediate hearing and found for the BBC; or stopped the search, ordered the BBC not to move or destroy any of the material relating to Campbell's programmes, and ordered a full-scale hearing of the issue of whether the search was lawful.

PREDICTING how judges might interpret general laws in specific cases is a hazardous business. However, lawyers who have followed the workings of the European Convention and the saga of Sir Edward's bill think it is unlikely that the Special Branch would have been able to proceed with their fishing expedition. There is at least a reasonable chance that a judge would have frozen the situation pending a full hearing of the 'national security' argument.

At the end of the day it may well be that the government's power to raid material gathered by journalists it doesn't like would be upheld under the Human Rights Act. On the other hand, it might not. We would at least have gained the possibility of arguing the point, if not the certainty of how that argument would be decided.

But there is another, arguably more important, dimension to the matter. It is to do with the subjective rather than the objective nature of state power. Governments do what they think they can get away with. They hesitate when they think they may be foiled. The context in which they act, or refrain from acting, is both political and legal.

It does not take a genius to work out why both the *NS* and the BBC were raided on Saturdays. MPs had dispersed for the weekend. They would not be able to complain until Monday. By then the searches would be well advanced or complete.

If the Special Branch had knocked on the BBC's door at, say, noon on Monday, the political storm that would have engulfed the government *before anything had been removed from the BBC's offices* would have been far more dramatic than anything we have yet seen. It was vital for the government's purposes that the stable door be debated only after the files and the films had bolted. The government's legal powers were no different on Monday than they were last Saturday. But the political contexts within which those powers were exercised were crucially different.

Under a Human Rights Act, then, there is a fair chance that the Special Branch would have refrained from their grosser violations of civil liberties during the past fortnight. If they had not been so restrained, the probability is that the BBC search, at least, would have been suspended so that the matter of 'national security' could be fully argued. And that would have allowed MPs to debate the issue in Parliament *before* the search had made much progress.

Those MPs who are tempted to apply the SEJ factor to Friday's business in Parliament should think again. It is *their* job to stay at Westminster this Friday and help Sir Edward's bill become law. □

See Tony Gifford and Andrew Lumsden, pp 12-13.

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'The aim was intimidation'*

'You can do it the* easy *way or the* hard *way. If necessary we will search this building until we get what we want.'* PATRICK FORBES and JOHN LLOYD *report

CHIEF INSPECTOR Stewart of the Strathclyde Police uttered the words above at 2.30 last Sunday morning, standing in the Controller's office of BBC Scotland, facing BBC Assistant Director General Alan Protheroe. Protheroe, like the BBC Scotland Controller Patrick Chalmers (trying to follow the drama by phone from his Aberdeen weekend cottage), was not used to being spoken to in that way.

The Assistant DG had, after all, warned the security services last December that the spy satellite episode in Duncan Campbell's *Secret Society* series could be sensitive on national security grounds. Chalmers is part of Scotland's establishment, dining with Malcolm Rifkind, the Secretary of State, entertaining the elite in the concert hall in the fine BBC building next to Glasgow University and the Botanical Gardens. Now a stony-faced, unimpressed Special Branch inspector was talking to Protheroe as if (a shadow Cabinet Minister was later to make the comparison) he was a Pakistani immigrant hauled out of bed at 2 am to justify his presence in Britain.

Raiding the *New Statesman* was, to many, one thing: turning over the BBC offices in Glasgow another. 'This has,' said one of the BBC's management board earlier this week, 'completely altered the relationship between the BBC and the government'. Marmaduke 'Duke' Hussey, the new chairman whom Labour had seen as the Prime Minister's appointment, was forced into outraged protest two months into his job. The government's pursuit of the spy satellite leak was not to be inhibited by liberal fears of being seen to take the knife to respected British institutions. This was the exercise of power.

It was, of course, a 'matter for the police'. Rifkind, facing an emergency motion from his shadow, Donald Dewar, in the Commons on Monday, said that the 'question as to whether a search warrant should have been asked for or granted is not a matter for ministers'. At the lobby briefing that morning, Bernard Ingham for the Prime Minister told correspondents that Mrs Thatcher first heard of the BBC raid on BBC radio news. The suspicion that the raid *was* sanctioned at Westminster has not been dispelled: what at least is certain is that the Special Branch were secure in their belief that it *would* be sanctioned.

All quiet

At the beginning of last week there was no indication that such a dramatic trawl was being considered. By Monday the Special Branch raid on the *New Statesman* was in its third day, and its pace was slowing down. It was moreover being conducted in a manner far removed from the hostilities about to be witnessed in Glasgow. The police, conscious of the TV cameras waiting outside, and the presence of *NS* journalists and solicitor inside the building, stayed on their best behaviour.

It seemed clear that the Special Branch was under pressure to deliver bodies to the Prime Minister by 3pm on Tuesday 27 January — the start of question time. By Monday it was obvious that this was not going to happen — the search of the varying *NS* journalists' homes had produced no evidence of any substance, and the exhaustive search of the *New Statesman* itself was yielding no more nuggests. The pace slackened noticeably.

By Wednesday 28 January the Special Branch sojourn at the offices of the *New Statesman* was drawing to a close — the contents of Duncan Campbell's numerous filing cabinets had been pored over, and the Branch had only his computer disks to occupy them. The computer expert they had imported was glued to the screen, and the rest of the team later amused themselves with the various computer games that Campbell had accumulated.

Before the Special Branch left that afternoon taking only 29 documents, they did, however, give one indication of the trouble to come. Following a call from his superior, superintendent Hilton Cole of the Metropolitan Special Branch, Detective Inspector Jim Williams, leading the *NS* search, asked Duncan Campbell about the whereabouts of the BBC transmission tape and the film production materials. (It appeared at the time that these questions were only about the banned programme). Campbell replied that these questions should be put to the BBC, but offered to arrange for a BBC copy of the tape to be forwarded by the BBC to the Branch. Williams seemed oddly uninterested in the proposal.

The clear implication of the questions — the only formal ones put to Campbell, and put in the

All taking a hand — from left to right: 'Duke' Hussey, Alan Protheroe, Malcolm Rifkind, Duncan Campbell, Ann Clwyd and last (but not least) Neil Kinnock

*Donald Dewar MP, House of Commons, Monday 2 February

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Special Branch officers loading BBC papers onto their van in Glasgow

presence of his solicitor — was that the Special Branch had been told to seize the master tapes — not as evidence, but to prevent the Director General, or Governors reconsidering their decision not to transmit the programme. Home Secretary Douglas Hurd told the Commons on Tuesday that Campbell indicated that the police should look for the materials in Glasgow — he did not. On the contrary while offering the police a copy tape in London, Campbell immediately passed on the appropriate warning to the BBC in Glasgow.

Now we are sacked

The next day's (Thursday 29 January) events served to obscure the Whitehall trails. Alasdair Milne had 'resigned'. The satellite affair was just the latest in a series of misadventures to befall a man whose dedication to public service broadcasting met no resonance in government.

The BBC immediately convulsed itself over speculation on his successor: but as the first fruits of that appeared in Friday's papers, the Strathclyde police were applying to a Sheriff for a warrant to search the offices of BBC Scotland on the basis that 'said article (the 'Parliamentary bypass operation') refers to information believed to be highly classified being in the possession of the BBC in connectionwith the preparation of a series of programmes entitled The Secret Society'. The warrant was granted, but the raid planned for that day was abruptly called off when the Special Branch realised that Scottish Secretary Malcolm Rifkind would be in the Queen Margaret Drive Building being interviewed for a radio programme.

Local heroes

Not, however, that BBC Scotland was aware of these political and legal manoeuvrings. As with the applications for the warrants to search the homes of *New Statesman* journalists, their office, and the injunction against Duncan Campbell, the hearings for the Scottish warrants were ex parte — the people involved were not present at the hearings, thus depriving them of the chance to contest them.

At 8 o'clock on Saturday 31 January, one week to the hour after the *NS* raid, 12 Special Branch Officers arrived at the door of BBC TV Scotland — five of them from London, seven from Strathclyde police.

The security staff refused to accept service of the warrant, stymying the police. Senior BBC management, and the BBC's Scottish lawyers, were called in, and by 10 am discussion had started with the police. They were nominally led by Chief Inspector Iain Stewart of Strathclyde Special Branch, but Detective Inspector Williams of the Metropolitan Special Branch (the officer in charge of the *NS* search) called the shots. The BBC's lawyers objected to the vague wording of the warrant (see box) and threatened to apply to the Court of Session in Edinburgh (Scotland's High Court) for an interim interdict to restrain the police from enforcing it. The police replied bluntly that the search should go ahead, and they were looking for material on *all six* programmes.

At 1 pm the arguments ended abruptly when Stewart insisted the search begin immediately. The production offices of *Secret Society* on the second floor were swamped by police and BBC management, with the search soon settling to a methodical examination of documents, video cassettes, and floppy disks. But at 8 pm the pace, and atmosphere, changed dramatically.

For the BBC lawyers had carried out their earlier threat, and approached the Court of Session. The senior policy officers were warned that Lord Clyde, the duty judge, was about to announce his judgement, and the outlook was bleak for the police case. Material gathered was thrown into boxes, and rushed out to waiting cars. It appeared they were trying to frustrate the interdict by taking the material away before the interdict reached them: indeed, the police did drive off before the court order arrived.

At 9 pm Lord Clyde had announced that he had accepted the BBC's arguments — namely that the warrant was drawn far too widely — and granted an interim interdict. The Crown representative in Court acknowledged that this required the police to return all of the material seized.

The police returned at 10.30 pm and the five boxes of material seized were carried back up to the Controller's office. In one breath Stewart announced that he was 'constructively' returning the material, but genie-like then produced another warrant, 'which authorised [him] to remove the material immediately'. Unfortunately the spell hadn't worked; the warrant referred to another set of premises — Campbell's flat across the road, as the BBC's lawyers pointed out. Stewart retrieved the warrant, left the room, reappearing only to admit, 'There has been a mistake', and seek an assurance (readily given) that the material he had brought back should remain untouched until his return.

At 11.30 the persistent police were back, with a new warrant. The BBC's lawyers pointed out that the new warrant differed only marginally from the previous warrant which the Court of Session had rejected as too imprecise — and the BBC would have to consider repeating their action in the Court of Session. In reply, Stewart invited the BBC side to accompany him to the Procurator Fiscal in the police HQ at Pitt St for 'consultation'. He left accompanied by Protheroe, and the BBC's lawyers. At that consultation it was made clear that however many times the BBC challenged the warrants, each time a new one would be produced. Protheroe accepted defeat.

And so at 2.30 on Sunday 1 February Chief Inspector Stewart and senior officers returned with Protheroe and the lawyers. Stewart's audience — the senior management of BBC Scotland — were treated to the following homily: 'I now require you to provide all of the material of the other five programmes as quickly as possible. We are here until we get it and we will get it. You are going to take some time to get organised, but there will be a limit to the time I can give you. You can do it the easy way or the hard way. If necessary we will search this building until we get what we want'.

The police left the room, and Protheroe explained to his stunned audience. 'Refining the offence to include everything under Section 2 of the Official Act (the original warrant had been under section 9: see box) has totally changed the situation . . . he is asking for everything . . . well, under the Official Secrets Act we have no rights . . . I would not bother to log anything, just shove it at them'. And so the BBC opted for the 'easy way'. Rather than have the offices of BBC Scotland torn apart, the film editors, and library staff were roused from their beds to clear out the desired material from offices spread throughout BBC Scotland.

By 8.30 on Sunday morning, the offices of *Secret Society* had been cleared out. Every scrap of film, magnetic tape, and videotape, and critically — the BBC's master transmission videotapes and safety backups of all six programmes had been taken. The BBC could now not show *any* Secret Society programmes.

The Whitehall trail

But why the rush to complete the trawl by Monday morning, when Protheroe had given his (repeated) assurance that the material relating to the programmes would be left untouched? Why the need to take away material relating to all programmes — and indeed *all* material relating to

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all the programmes, when five have no bearing on national security? Why above all was the raid being directed from London — with the officer in charge of the operation, Superintendant Hilton Cole of the Special Branch, liaising with Bernard Sheldon, legal adviser to the Security Services, for confirmation of orders and moves? The inescapable conclusion is that the raid, and its conduct were, if not explicitly sanctioned by 10 Downing St, at least assumed Mrs Thatcher's tacit approval.

Closing ranks

The sudden shock of the police raid acted, as external pressure often does, to close ranks at the top of the BBC. 'Rarely,' said a senior executive yesterday, 'has there been such unity of purpose between the management and the Board'. The board of management meeting on Monday morning was followed, in the afternoon, by a board meeting: both Hussey and his deputy chairman, Lord Barnett, were 'on side' from the start. Neither man had any doubt that the five *Secret Society* programmes were in the public interest: both had been deeply disturbed by the reports they had received of the police raid, and by the attitude of the police to Protheroe and the BBC Scotland staff.

Hussey was shown a draft of a letter to be sent to Douglas Hurd and Malcolm Rifkind: before signing it, Hussey strengthened its tone to give an unequivocal sense of his anger at the weekend's events. His letter began: 'I followed with mounting dismay the weekend's events and I must protest most vigorously at the way in which the Special Branch sought to obtain a wide range of material relating to the BBC's series *Secret Society* from the BBC's headquarters in Glasgow.'

There appears, presently, little doubt that the BBC does mean to broadcast the series, shorn of the satellite episode. Michael Checkland, the acting director general, made clear his intention to do so to senior colleagues on Monday afternoon — a decision which will further enrage those Tory MPs who have complained bitterly over Campbell's commission from the BBC to make the films, and whose view of the BBC as a near subversive institution has been confirmed by the affair.

No votes in security

Labour's leadership has always had an ambiguous view of the spy satellite issue: when the government demanded support for its view that the film breached national security, the senior figures whom Neil Kinnock summoned around him — Roy Hattersley, Denis Healey and John Smith — took the view that the party had no choice but to agree. After the briefing from Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, they continued their support for that line — finding their only means of attack being castigation of the government for not moving more firmly and quickly to stop the leak. It was a position with which some shadow cabinet members felt uncomfortable, and which grew less comfortable as the Special Branch raids took place. It was also a position which deprived their later attacks of a firm basis.

They thought, too, that there were few votes in the issue, and that the chances of losing votes by being branded as traitors were high. Yet at the same time many were genuinely angered by the government-inspired action. So it was that, on Monday, Gerald Kaufman demanded an emergency debate, and was granted one for the following day.

Monday's exchange had shown the Tories in much more confident mood than last week: there was no chance, this time, of any constitutional upset. As ever, the party had chosen to rally in a crisis, and soundings on the back benches showed there to be no prospect of revolt, whatever the depth of private misgivings about the BBC's appalling treatment. Teddy Taylor put it in a nutshell 'There's no party like the Conservative party for rallying round the flag of national security — the feeling is we understand it better than them, let's show 'em'. Another, Robin Squire, paid a backhanded compliment to the *NS*: 'There's nothing like the initials *NS* for uniting the party — they stand for both National Security, and *New Statesman*.'

The pre-debate exchange between Kinnock and Thatcher on Tuesday afternoon showed the way the wind lay. Kinnock, to the great annoyance of backbenchers, was called four times, slamming into the Prime Minister for debasing the rule of law and the reputation of the police. Thatcher was calmer: at one point, she quoted from a 1978 — Labour government — white paper which maintained that 'there is likely to be broad consensus on national security' — a consensus which, she said, Kinnock was now attempting to break, though he had agreed to it earlier. The police, she maintained, did their job without political interference.

Gerald Kaufman opened the debate proper with a typically competent and controlled speech, taunting Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney General to deny that it was he who had ordered the police raid on the BBC. He referred back to an earlier intervention by Michael Heseltine — to the effect that 'a grave breach of national security had taken place' — as a 'peculiar and rare example of a rat trying to jump back on to a sinking ship'. But Douglas Hurd matched it: he took the same high ground as Thatcher, rejecting charges of interference categorically, using Labour's support on national security grounds against the Opposition. 'Neil Kinnock,' he said, 'clearly felt that certain measures should have been taken. I would ask him whether he really hopes to convince the country that when a serious breach has occurred the action taken should not be less than determined and thorough'.

David Owen concentrated on the narrower issue, raised by Hussey's letter, of the scope of the warrants issued in Glasgow. The *NS* warrant, he said, had been specific and the police had acted courteously. In Glasgow, the warrant had been broadly phrased and the police had been rough. The police in Glasgow, he said, had mounted a 'vast fishing expedition', catching five programmes for reasons 'we can only surmise'.

The opposition parties secured one, vital breakthrough — by chance. Peter Lovat Fraser, the Solicitor General for Scotland, helpfully told Tory MP Jonathan Aitken that the Lord Advocate for Scotland, Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, had been 'consulted and kept informed' on the issuing of the warrants. John Morris, the shadow Solicitor General, together with Owen and Dewar, leapt on the admission and pressed Rifkind for details — which he refused to give. Aitken, one of the few Conservatives to have voiced liberal doubts on this matter, noted that 'there is a place in society for awkward questions'. The awkward question here is: did the government minister (Lord Cameron) who, we now by chance know *did* oversee the Glasgow raid consult ministerial colleagues? And has not his involvement in the affair revealed the government's claims of non-involvement to be — to use the unparliamentary expression — a lie?

The final majority — 151 — was massive: the dissenters on the Tory benches silent or non-existent. The magic formula — national security — covered the House of Commons like a thick fog. Few speakers dared to challenge it: none pointed out that what Campbell's story had put in the public arena for the first time was no more than that a £500m project was under way, and its name.

The essential issues

The more the guns sound in parliamentary battle, the more the essential issues are obscured by gunsmoke. These are:

- The contention that an undertaking to Parliament was broken, either openly, or discretely by taking advantage of an escape clause that makes the government agreement to inform the Parliamentary Accounts Committee of major defence expenditure a nullity. Tuesday's press release from Robert Sheldon (chair of the PAC) was noticeably muddier than some of his earlier pronouncements, with Mr Sheldon accepting that 'the wool *could* have been pulled over his eyes by officials' — though believing this to be *improbable*.
- The more that Labour refuses to address this point, and calls for tougher, faster action on journalists like Campbell the more dangerous becomes the position of those seeking to expose such malpractice, and the more likely that further major infringements of civil liberties will taken place. □

The First Warrant

THE WARRANT issued for the BBC raid allowed the police to do much as they liked. The relevant passage authorises 'Ian Stewart Detective Chief Inspector of Strathclyde Police, with such assistance as he may find necessary to enter said premises at Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow, and if necessary to use force for making such entry whether by breaking open doors or otherwise, and to search the said premises, and if necessary every person found therein, and to seize sketch, plan model, article, note or document or anything of like nature including in particular any film which is evidence of an offence under said Act, having been or about to be committed which he may find on said premises or on any such person, and with regard to or in connection with which he has reasonable ground for suspecting that an offence under said act has been, or is about to be committed, and for that purpose to make patent all shut and lockfast places in said premises or do further or otherwise as to your Lordship may seem meet.'

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Human rights under the law

A Bill of Rights will be put to the House of Commons on Friday.
TONY GIFFORD ***argues for it.***
Overleaf, we look up Magna Carta

WE NEED TO use more creative imagination over the introduction of a Bill of Rights into English law. The argument has been carried on in terms only of what the judges in the higher courts will make of human rights. It has ignored the day-to-day use which could be made of a Bill of Rights by defence lawyers in those many cases in the lower courts where human rights issues arise.

The Bill passed by the Lords in 1986, and introduced in the Commons on Friday (6 February), provides that the fundamental rights and freedoms set out in the European Convention 'shall have the force of law in the United Kingdom'. No person acting on behalf of the Crown or government, or any other public body, shall do any act which infringes those rights and freedoms. That includes police officers and Crown prosecutors.

All prior legislation which grants powers to public authorities is to have effect only to the extent that the exercise of the power does not infringe these rights and freedoms. So every court, down to the magistrates trying a newspaper seller for highway obstruction, must interpret the law in accordance with the Convention.

This would mean that in any criminal trial in which the defence could establish that the accused was seeking to exercise his or her fundamental rights and freedoms — such as freedom of expression under article 10 of the Bill, or freedom of peaceful assembly under article 11 — the burden of proof would be on the prosecution to show that the action taken by the police in arresting the accused, or the Crown in prosecuting, was necessary in a democratic society for the purpose of preventing disorder, or protecting the rights of others, or for another of those limitations permitted in those articles.

I emphasise the words 'necessary in a democratic society', because they appear in the Convention as the critical point of balance between the exercise of fundamental rights and the duty to respect the rights of others. They appear nowhere in English law, which has developed the much looser concept of 'reasonableness' as a criterion for using coercive powers. They are words which juries, the embodiment of the concept of democratic justice, are well qualified to interpret.

I believe that the idea of incorporating basic human rights into the law, while it may be uncongenial to the British judicial mind, is particularly well suited to the British tradition of justice done by lay men and women. The combination of the Bill of Rights and trial by jury could be a protection of civil liberties which would be unique in the European experience.

Imagine a retrial of Sarah Tisdall, or Pat Arrowsmith, or Denis Lemon and *Gay News*, all convicted for communicating material which the State found offensive. In each case the letter of the law suggested that there was little chance of a defence, but a clear defence would have been available under the Bill of Rights. In each case real democratic justice could have been done by a jury deciding whether those prosecutions were necessary in a democratic society.

HUMAN RIGHTS issues constantly arise in magistrates' courts. They deal with those low-level, but intensely important interferences by the police in forms of democratic participation: the prosecutions of newspaper sellers for obstruction, pickets for refusing to move across the road, street collectors for collecting without a permit, street corner speakers for using insulting words.

Under the Public Order Act the controls become even more draconian. People may be prosecuted for displaying a placard which is likely to cause alarm or distress to another person; for organising a march without telling the police beforehand; for refusing to accept the orders of the police as to the size, or place, or duration of a demonstration.

In all these cases the law gives little option to the courts but to convict: the Bill of Rights, however, would give the defence the opportunity to argue that the arrest was an infringement of a fundamental right which was not necessary in a democratic society. The upholding of human rights is not an esoteric exercise to be left to the higher judiciary. It would be integrated into the whole machinery of justice.

We meet a genuine problem in the appeal courts. What the Lord Chief Justice considers 'necessary in a democratic society' is likely to differ from the judgements of civil libertarians. The limitations on the exercise of fundamental rights are defined in general terms, and would be restrictively interpreted. A Bill of Rights is not a panacea, but a form of minimum protection.

Even so, the Bill *will* have an impact in the higher courts. It will open up the field of argument, so that the courts will have to decide a human rights issue, not by adhering to the letter of a repressive law, or by harking back to the mystifying rules of the common law, *but by applying (and if they choose distorting) a statement of rights which the people will know and understand.*

The present judiciary may well make the same decisions as they do now on such issues as roadblocks during the miners' strike, or the rights of gay men to advertise for partners. But the argument, in court and in public opinion, will be different. Gradually judges may be educated into applying the Bill of Rights in favour of the unpowerful people whom the Convention was intended to protect. The rulings will at least be no worse than they are now, and there will *still* be the backstop of an application to Strasbourg.

Underlying my whole approach is the belief that a Bill of Rights can have an educative effect which would extend far beyond the courts of justice. In the Broadwater Farm Report we recommended that the local authority included in every secondary school curriculum a course of education in legal rights. In response the leader of the Council said that it was a good idea, but where do we find out what our rights are? It was a fair question, for the law's answer — that you are free to do anything which the law does not prohibit you from doing — is of little use, since it gives all power to the authorities.

In Canada, when a Bill of Rights was recently passed, a tee-shirt which printed people's rights out was sold in thousands. People need to know their rights in order to defend them, and stand up for them. In a society where increasing power is taken by the State and its agencies, where dissenters and non-conformists are under fierce attack, a public opinion which was educated about fundamental rights would be a powerful weapon in preserving democratic values against intolerance and the abuse of power. □

Tony (Lord) Gifford is a barrister and Labour peer.

London showing of banned
SECRET SOCIETY
film by
Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

Monday, 9 February
7.30 p.m. Conway Hall
Chair: Loretta Loach

Speakers: Rt Hon. Tony Benn MP; Duncan Campbell; Sarah Spencer, NCCL; Harry Conroy, NUJ; Ann Clwyd MP; Paddy Leach, BETA; and a spokesperson for ACTT

Contact: Tom O'Malley, CPBF, 01-437 2795

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Magna Carta came from the North

When President Kennedy in the early '60s insisted on visiting Runnymede the British yawned behind their hands. Who gave a damn then, except sentimental Yanks, for 'the Great Charter'? It's becoming a different story today.

ANDREW LUMSDEN ***on the earliest famous statement of our liberties***

GOOD OLD Magna Carta won't lie down. 'Great constitutional enactment . . . survived the years notwithstanding [it lacks] legal protection against repeal' (Lord Scarman in the *Independent*, 30 January). Actually it was repealed on 24 October 1215, just four months after it was signed, and by the one authority who at the time had an unimpeachable constitutional right to over-ride King John's signature: the pope, Innocent III.

No doubt our ambassador to the Holy See since 1985, David Lane, is still discussing the matter at the same speed as the Falklands negotiations. Seriously though, Peter Kellner's argument *(page 7)* and Tony Gifford's (*page 11*) that the Left should be looking kindly on the bill to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into British law — the bill was first launched by Scarman in a House of Lords version — suffers no damage from events that surrounded 'the Great Charter'.

First off, it was the North of England which made the running in 1215, fed up with demands made by that southern-based despot King John. The pressure 'originated with a body of north-country barons' (A. L. Poole, *Oxford History of England* p469) who then made common cause with landowners in Essex. It was the young who were uppity.

The youthful ringleaders were Eustace de Vesci from Alnwick in Northumberland and Robert Fitz Walter from Dunmow in Essex, constituencies represented now by Liberal chief whip Alan Beith (Berwick-on-Tweed) and Tory vice-chairman Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden). It will be interesting to see how they vote or speak this week.

Mrs Thatcher, head of government in constitutional descent from King John, would appear to be in breach of at least two of the 61 articles of Magna Carta, and seemingly can only defend herself by appealing to the repeal of the Charter by Innocent III, which would certainly be the last straw for Ian Paisley. The two are:
Article 13: liberties and free customs of all cities, boroughs, towns and ports are confirmed *(what about the GLC and the Met counties?)*
Article 20: no one to be deprived of the means of livelihood *(what about an economic strategy designed to 'shake out' 3 million unemployed, then, with the worst burden falling on the North?)*

Distrain and distress

People interminably on remand should be citing the celebrated *article 40*: 'to no one will we sell, deny or *defer*, right or justice'. The present drugs hunt by Customs, which can be objected to on wider grounds of strategic unsoundness (*NS* 17 October 1986) breaches Magna Carta 41-42: 'all merchants entitled to come and go freely except in time of war'. All local councils should ponder this from the 13th century (*articles* 23-25, 28-31, and 38): 'local officials are not to abuse their power'.

EUSTACE DE VESCI and Robert Fitz Walter were hotheads in that summer and autumn of 1215, who no sooner got their Magna Carta than they were inviting the French, in the person of Louis, son of Philip Augustus, to cross the Channel and sort King John out once and for all.

Their latter-day equivalent, moving heaven and earth to oust Mrs T, is plainly David Owen, with his calls first for us to import the French notion of nuclear deterrence, and now de Gaulle-style constitution formation as prelude to economic revival (beware an SDP appeal for French troops).

It was in fact old fogeys of church and state who in 1215 worked out the actual phrasing of Magna Carta at Runnymede and got John at last to fix his seal to the dotted line — much as it has been the elderly great-and-good rather than occupational lefties who provided the original impetus in Britain for this week's Human Rights bill debate.

Their leader, the Lord Scarman of the 13th century moment, was Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, who 'succeeded in converting a purely baronial document into the Great Charter' (Poole, page 473). His reward was to be 'suspended' by the pope within months for objecting to Innocent's repeal of Magna Carta.

Runcie, your hour could be nearing. Least noticed of the facts relating to Magna Carta, but far and away the most relevant to today's debates about Britain's exceptional lack of a genuine Supreme Court to which citizens might appeal against the Crown-in-Parliament, is the arrangement that was made on the banks of the Thames in June 1215 should the head of government step out of line: 'twenty-five barons entrusted with the execution of the Charter were empowered together with the community of the whole land "to distrain and distress him in every possible way" ' (Poole page 476). □

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— Michael Heseltine
22 January 1987

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An Open Letter to the Chairman of the BBC

Phillip Whitehead

DEAR DUKE HUSSEY,

You have invited applications for the post of Director General. This is what the applicants ought to tell you, but won't. Candid applications are even less welcome than candid friends, but you could do with both. In the past few months you have found out the hard way that there are more kicks than ha'pence in running the BBC under a government glutted with power. All friends of civil liberty will applaud your protest at the raids by the Thought Police on the BBC in Glasgow. The midnight knock on the door is not unknown at the *New Statesman*; it is all too familiar to many other citizens whom the police feel they can harass with impunity.

To unleash this state apparatus against the BBC shows the extent to which the government wishes to coerce the national instrument of broadcasting. For 60 years all acute public debates have turned at some stage into a controversy about the BBC. The pressure is nothing new. The current vulnerability of the BBC is. Internal trauma, external changes in the form and funding of communications, and a government deeply hostile to publicly funded corporations make a potent witches' brew. Production staff feel the pricking of their thumbs. And at this time you have just sacked the Director General.

The manner of his going was painful. But there is never a good way to remove someone from an organisation with which he feels totally identified. 'This clever, high-minded man is being pushed aside,' Harold Nicholson wrote in diary, on the eve of the board meeting which sacked Director General Ogilvie in 1941; 'I hate it, but I agree.' That seems to have been the sentiment of the Board of Management members who sat in catatonic silence after you made your lunchtime announcement. The fact that no one said anything is some sort of proof that the person you need is not among them. Some of them may murmur to you now that your problems have been solved. This tense difficult man, famously abrupt, who gave to his bagpipes what he should have saved for humanity, is a convenient scapegoat. But he was symptom, not cause, of the Corporation's malaise.

ALASDAIR MILNE inherited, and had to propound, the doctrine of universality; the notion that there was no area of broadcasting, however large or small, in which the BBC should not be a commanding presence. The technical as well as political objections to that view were already formidable. He sought to be the ultimate arbiter of priorities and resources in bruising struggles with his peers. Aubrey Singer and Dick Francis were removed as abruptly as he was to be. With the support of his Board he might have prevailed for a while, but the political rows he incurred as editor-in-chief diminished that long before your time. A director general can come through a political crisis, even if he is not famous for tact and emollience, if his chairman backs him, and public opinion does the same. Sir Ian Jacob and his staff came through Suez — but he had the total confidence of his chairman, Cadogan. Milne had to work with three chairmen inside four years. Two died. You dismissed him.

> ***The position of Director General is an impossible one — paralysed by the over-riding need for consistency, chief executive responsible for fixed assets worth £90 million and an income of £200 million, editor-in-chief and resident theologian, interpreting and executing one in divisible Corporation***

> ***The BBC is not particularly large as an industrial enterprise, but it is hopelessly ill-served for its size. Power is neither rationally used at the top nor effectively devolved lower down. There is no equivalent of a proper board embracing both management and overview***

The Governors are not aloof in this matter. They are part of the problem too. The Director General's inability to give a clear lead to his staff, spelt out in the language of public service, came in part from the fact that he had to face both ways. The Board to which he was accountable met separately from his own Board of Management, and initially without him. You may shrug off the exasperation of BBC management at what it sees as the fortnightly whims of the Governors. No doubt there are problems the other way. The Governors have every reason to want to know why the Corporation gets such appalling legal advice, and why senior executives have a strange inability to talk through editorial problems together. But you ought to ask whether the separation at the top is sensible.

The BBC is not particularly large as an industrial enterprise, but it is hopelessly ill-served for its size. Power is neither rationally used at the top nor effectively devolved lower down. There is no equivalent of a proper board embracing both management and overview. There should be. If the Governors want to be non-executive directors they should sit on a single board with the BBC's executives, hewn to a common a purpose, rather than continue the hesitations and hostilities of the moment. This means that the Governors and the Board of Management should meet as one, with the Governors able to meet by themselves if they see fit, as non-executive directors can. The fiction that the Governors merely review after the event has vanished in practice; it should not be honoured in theory.

> ***The BBC cannot survive without an ethic . . . The candidate you need must have a passionate sense of the public service and the civil courage to say when the BBC believes that the public's interest is not the government's interest, as well as to tell his/her staff where and when they have failed***

What is needed now is more identification of the Governors with their public service charge. The government fears that you have 'gone native' already. After your predecessor's lamentable response to the bullying of Leon Brittan anything less supine must come as a shock to them. It will not be lost on you that the *Real Lives* row assumed the proportions it did because of the lack of communication, at all levels, between Milne and Stuart Young. Can you do better with any single chief executive?

You are often reported as saying that you can't understand why the BBC is not like Times Newspapers. It cannot be. Broadcasting is different — in its lead times, in the complexity of the editorial process, and most of all in the absence of a single autocrat of the Murdoch type. Where the analogy may hold up is in the need for a variety of independent editorial voices. The hapless Milne took upon himself ultimate editorial responsibility for all programme decisions, however remote. At the same time he was beset by managerial decisions, by the need to put a public face to the BBC's rebuttal of the Peacock Committee, and the complaints of your predecessors.

It is worth looking back at the minority note of the Annan Committee ten years ago. We said then: 'We consider the position of the Director General an impossible one — paralysed by the over-riding need for consistency, chief executive responsible ▷

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for fixed assets worth £90 million and an income of £200 million, editor-in-chief and resident theologian, pope and emperor in one, interpreting and executing one indivisible Corporation.' The numbers have increased since then. So have the problems.

NO ONE MAN or woman can fulfil all these functions satisfactorily. You are widely rumoured to be seeking an editor-in-chief who can work with a talented manager, Michael Checkland, rather as Jeremy Isaacs has operated in partnership with Justin Dukes in the successful launch of Channel 4. That is sensible, but you should go further. Whoever you choose will have to operate in a world where some things are too large, and others too small, to be the proper concern of the BBC. The claim to universality will have to be abandoned — not to the vagaries of the market or the rapacious appetites of your former patron Rupert Murdoch, but to alternative forms of international co-operation and domestic public service.

The BBC should become a patron of other programmers, bringing in independent production made to a variety of editorial voices. It should use its 60 per cent advantage in costs over ITV to reassert its strength in quality programming, not dissipate it in a vacuous attempt to fill every broadcast hour with schlock. The partnership with the Open University, seldom lauded now, could be a model for new developments in local radio and cable, no longer controlled by the BBC, but in fruitful partnership with it.

To do all this you will need to bring in an exceptional talent, the more so since it will need to be done against a background of unremitting hostility from a government which, I suspect, you and your fellow grandees at Brooks' and Boodle's despise as much as I do, for its cheapskate vulgarity and naked abuse of power. The talent you want will be attuned to changing times for the BBC; not an imperialist but a lamplighter. The BBC cannot survive without an ethic, and aggrandisement was never enough. The candidate you need must have a passionate sense of the public service, and the civil courage to say when the BBC believes that the public interest is not the government's interest, as well as to tell his/her staff where and when they have failed.

There are such people, as surely as there are thousands of BBC employees who can still define for you why they choose to work for the Corporation rather than take up more lucrative pursuits elsewhere. Do not make the mistake of thinking that you can appease this government by choosing some emollient figure who is clearly of their persuasion, however frequently he or she has graced their dinner parties or flattered their prejudices.

The successful applicant ought to be a broadcaster first and foremost, who has already run a communications operation of some complexity with success and the respect of all but the most redneck politician and vulpine hack. The speed of your processes suggests that you had a candidate in mind before Milne was forced out. Experience shows that first impressions can mislead, as the IBA's blunders in some of its franchise interviews showed. Look at the record as well as the surface gloss. The wrong candidate now could also be the last.

Yours sincerely,
Phillip Whitehead

PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

Suez and the Ponting factors

Peter Hennessy

BEN PIMLOTT, biographer and editor of Hugh Dalton, produced an appealing metaphor the other day to mark the appearance of the third and last volume of his Daltonian trilogy.* Compiling an oral archive by taking a tape-recorder to those who knew Dalton or worked with him was like talking to one's footnotes, he wrote. That image returned to me again and again last month as I travelled the country with my BBC Radio producer, Mark Laity, talking to the survivors of Suez.

My 'footnotes', ranged in age from mid-sixties to mid-eighties, were impressive people — former Cabinet ministers, chiefs of staff, permanent secretaries, private secretaries and military commanders or planners. Most had never spoken publicly about Suez before. Only the release of the Suez papers at the Public Record Office on 2 January had loosened their tongues. Sir Richard Powell, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence in 1956, told me: 'I very strongly feel that if you take a pledge of confidence, you should observe that confidence throughout your life and it's only because the documents have now been published and they're in the public domain that I would feel able to go beyond that.'

As Sir Richard said of the Suez affair in *A Canal Too Far* on BBC Radio 3 last Saturday: 'All officials were doubters, they all felt doubt and hesitation . . . that would be typical of them, to have doubts but to carry out instructions.' For some it was a matter of outrage rather than doubt or hesitation. But none of them was tempted in the intervening years to 'do a Ponting' and tell all which, in its way, is a remarkable tribute to the ethos of the old administrative clan.

The most difficult moment for those in the know must have been fairly shortly after the event when Sir Anthony Eden denied British collusion with Israel before the attack on Egypt (the Israeli assault provided the cover-story, the need to separate the combatants, used to justify the Anglo-French invasion). During his last appearance in the House of Commons on 20 December 1956, Eden said, under questioning: 'There were no plans to get together to attack Egypt . . . there was no foreknowledge that Israel would attack Egypt.'

Sir Donald Logan, private secretary to Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, was the only man from the British side to attend both meetings at Sèvres in the Paris suburbs where the agreement to collude was concluded with the French and the Israelis. He was in the officials' box in the chamber of the Commons when Eden denied foreknowledge. I asked him how he reacted.

Logan: I felt that at that moment his attempt to justify his intervention to separate the forces simply exploded.
Hennessy: Did you feel at all that you should have done what Clive Ponting in another generation did?
Logan: In those days civil servants were not expected to betray their ministers and I certainly did not feel this, no.
Hennessy: You don't regard lying to the House of Commons as a cardinal sin on the part of an elected politician?
Logan: Whatever I may think, it is, I think, for ministers to decide their own conduct in the House of Commons and for the House of Commons and the public to judge ministers on their performance. I think the idea that a civil servant should get up and say 'The Minister is not telling you the truth' any time that this is likely to happen is a recipe for chaos and certainly for disloyalty.

THE LOGAN LINE was taken, with minor variations, by the other officials to whom I talked who knew of what had transpired at Sèvres before the Israelis struck on 29 October, after which you did not need a training in British intelligence to put two and two together. Would today's Whitehall generation see it that way? Most, but not all would be my guess.

However, two of the public servants I interviewed for *A Canal Too Far* did indicate they had considered their positions in 1956 — Lord Gladwyn, the Ambassador to Paris, and Lord Sherfield, Ambassador to Washington. Eden and the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, travelled to Paris to consult with their French opposite numbers, Mollet and Pineau, on 16 October. Lord Gladwyn met them at their airport. In the car Eden told him he was not to be allowed into the meeting. 'I was furious and said this was a most extraordinary thing to happen but I couldn't do anything about it.'

> ***'This was a most extraordinary thing to happen but I couldn't do anything'***

What he did was to write a furious letter to Lloyd which turned up in Eden's Downing Street files released at the Public Record Office last month. He considered his position but stayed on as resignation 'wouldn't have done any good for anybody'. Lord Sherfield, like Lord Gladwyn, was told nothing. If he had known and had been instructed to mislead Eisenhower and Dulles 'I don't think I could have been a party to the deception'.

One story I was hoping could be confirmed couldn't. It's this. A group of senior Foreign Office diplomats, kept out of the story on Eden's instructions, knew something nasty was afoot, didn't know what to do about it and sought the advice of a senior, respected privy counsellor, Lord Attlee (who, naturally, didn't know anything either). They met him at his flat in the Temple. 'You're civil servants', the old PM is alleged to have said in his briskest Major Attlee style, 'Go away and do as you're told.'

Does anybody know if it's true? □

*Ben Pimlott, (editor), *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60*, Cape, £40.

Peter Hennessy is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute.

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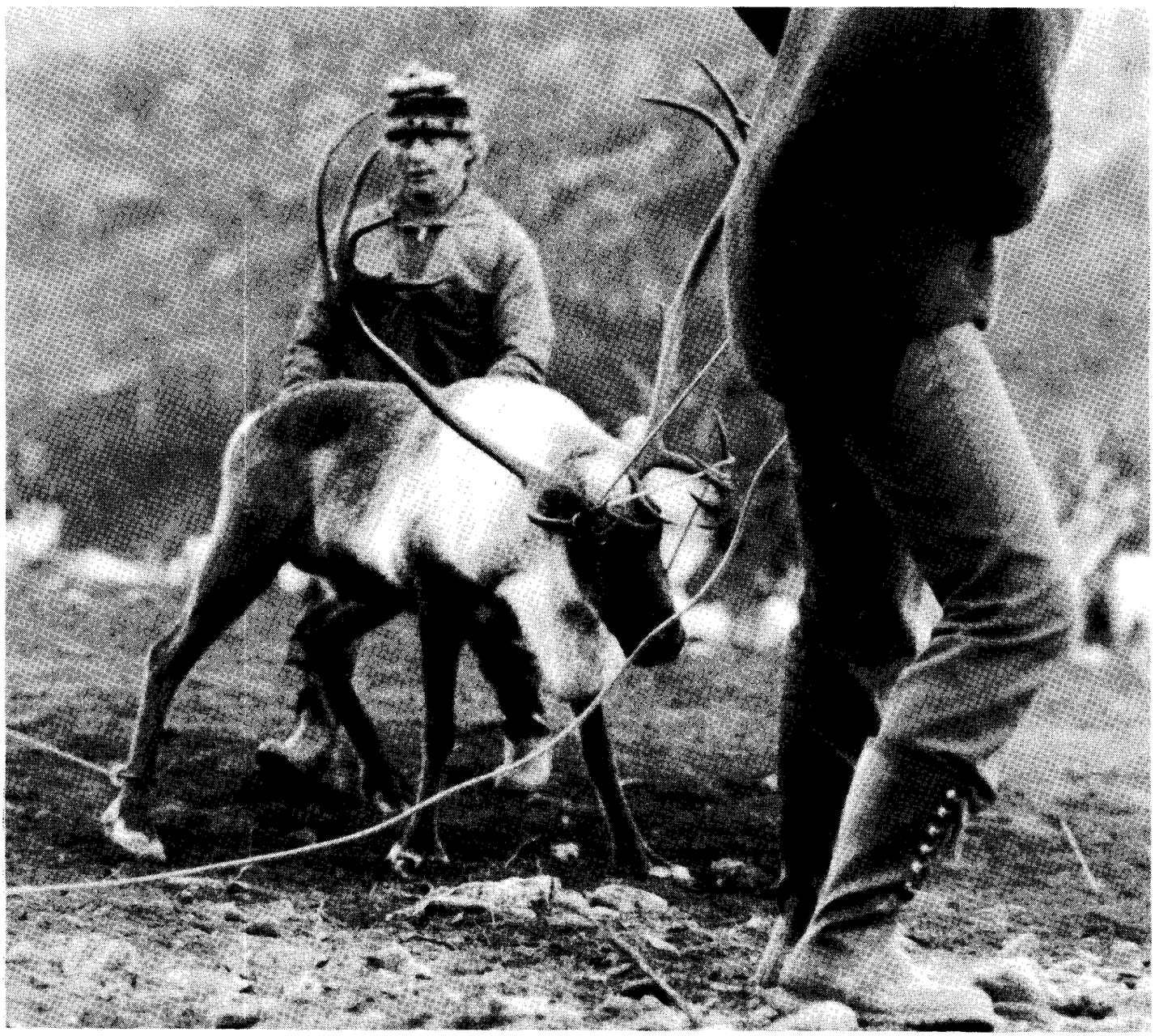

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ECONOMICS

Don't expect oil to slump

Mehdi Varzi

OVER THE PAST 18 months, the oil market appears to have gone full circle. OPEC's previous attempt to defend prices came effectively to an end in the second half of 1985 with Saudi Arabia's decision to increase its share of the world oil market. As a result, world oil prices slumped from over $30 per barrel in November 1985 to under $10 per barrel by mid-1986. Then suddenly, in a remarkable *volte face*, the Saudis agreed to return to a system of production quotas in August 1986 and, at the December OPEC ministerial session, played a leading role in the organisation's decision to return to fixed pricing. OPEC's return to discipline has been the principal factor behind the rise in oil prices to around the $18 area.

There remains, however, a considerable difference of views among oil industry observers and experts about the future course of oil prices. At one end of the spectrum, there are those who believe that free market forces will inevitably undermine OPEC's latest attempt at price management. They are opposed by others who are convinced that OPEC will succeed in maintaining oil prices at levels well above those that might pertain in a free market. I am personally inclined towards the latter view but perhaps the matter needs a little further elaboration.

Anyone who has studied the history of the international oil industry will no doubt have come across the word 'cartel' or 'trust' repeatedly. The modern oil industry has its origins in mid to late 19th Century America. From its very beginnings, attempts were made to control the oil market. From time to time, these attempts broke down, either because oil prices rose too quickly, thereby encouraging independent producers to enter the scene, or because the government of the time acted against cartel-type activity.

In the 1930s further attempts were made to control oil production in the US via the Texas Railroad Commission. At the same time, because of the strategic and military value of oil, outside governments became involved more and more in foreign oil prospecting both directly and indirectly. Moreover, the major international oil companies, all of whom were either American or West European, came virtually to control the international oil trade.

In fact, so strong was their grip on the oil trade that it took OPEC — which was set up in 1960 to defend the interests of a group of Third World producers — more than a decade to become the major source of influence over world oil prices. (It is therefore, hypocritical of Western experts and governments to accuse OPEC of some sort of 'immoral' activity when they themselves were undertaking similar types of activity for many years, well before OPEC was established.)

HISTORY therefore shows that free competition has been the excepton rather than the rule in the world oil market. In my view, even now, certain factors are working to prevent free market forces from re-establishing their predominant role over oil prices, as they did briefly in 1986. Above all, by far the greatest proportion of 'cheap' oil reserves is owned by OPEC producers, especially in the Persian Gulf region (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and Iran combined possess some 400 billion barrels of proven crude reserves, equivalent to over 50 per cent of the world total).

Outside OPEC, there is currently very little surplus production capacity available. Moreover, the lifespans of the crude reserves of some of the major non-OPEC producers such as the US, Great Britain, and the USSR, are declining because they are failing to discover enough crude to keep up with levels of production. Moreover, the oil price war has discouraged exploration and development activity in high-cost areas such as Alaska and the North Sea, and also undermined plans to encourage the production of synthetic fuels. These factors are likely to raise OPEC's chances of maintaining oil prices at 'high' levels in future years.

However, long run trends *by themselves* are unlikely to be of much help to OPEC over the next 12 months or so. The basic question facing the oil market is whether or not OPEC will succeed in continuing to behave in a relatively restrained fashion this year. As I shall explain below, I believe that the answer is yes, for the following reasons, but perhaps with some qualifications:

1. The main lesson of the price war: Few oil exporters, whether OPEC or non-OPEC, want to go through the price nightmare of 1986 again. It is hardly surprising that OPEC appears to have been more successful in obtaining the co-operation of major non-OPEC exporters than in previous years. Among them are countries of all types of political persuasion (Mexico, USSR, Malaysia, Egypt, Norway and Oman), the most notable exception being the UK which has declined to co-operate with OPEC in any way whatsoever.

> ***'Oil exporters as a whole have no stomach for another oil price collapse'***

Oil exporters have learnt the central lesson that, given the relatively low short-term elasticity of oil demand, the best way to maximise revenues is to raise prices rather than output. Psychologically speaking, non-OPEC co-operation with OPEC will boost OPEC's morale and signal to the oil market that oil exporters as a whole have no stomach for another oil price collapse.

2. Saudi Arabia and Iran: One of the central strengths of the current OPEC accord is that the two major protagonists in OPEC, Saudi Arabia and Iran, have agreed on the need for defending oil prices at around $18 per barrel. The history of OPEC has shown that the organisation appears to be at its most cohesive whenever these two countries agree on overall objectives.

3. A producer-consumer consensus: There appears to be a growing appetite for some degree of oil price stability among both oil-exporting and *importing* states. A general consensus appears to have grown that whereas $30 oil was too expensive, $10 oil was too cheap, and that somewhere around $18 per barrel meets the interests of both sides. The reaction of the US administration is a case in point.

After having consistently called for a 'free' international oil market in the midst of the oil price collapse last year and boasted about bringing about the downfall of OPEC (President Reagan is reported to have said 'we have brought OPEC to its knees'), the US Administration remained silent after the successful December meeting of OPEC. This was hardly surprising given that the oil price collapse has had a disastrous effect on domestic US output. Currently US crude production is averaging 8.3-8.4 million barrels per day, some 700,000 barrels per day below end-1985.

4. OPEC's production quotas: On almost any analysis of non-Communist world oil supply and demand, OPEC's quota ceiling of 15.8 million barrels per day for the first six months of this year is very conservative. Even if output were to exceed the official ceiling by some 500,000 barrels per day, crude stocks worldwide would have to be drawn down by some 2.5 million barrels per day to meet winter demand. This would go a long way towards countering the massive stock-build that took place in mid-1986 as a result of OPEC over-production. In fact, too rigid an observance of the 15.8 million barrels per day quota ceiling could well send oil prices over $20 per barrel by mid-year.

OF COURSE any agreement also has its weaknesses, and the OPEC accord is no exception. Its major weakness is that it represents a return to the old OPEC strategy of attempting to fix everything at one and the same time — that is, crude prices, price differentials and production quotas.

Thus the accord is an anachronism. No attempt has been made to allow for the rapidly expanding crude futures market which, in terms of trading volume, often overwhelms the physical market and accentuates short-term price volatility. In short, the agreement lacks a safety valve for the free market. OPEC should have fixed either prices or production. An attempt to fix both is bound to succumb to pressure sooner or later either on the side of supply or demand.

Nevertheless, few producers want to go through another oil price war. Thus if the current OPEC accord does succumb to downward pressures in the course of the next few months, OPEC are likely to meet at very short notice in order to prevent oil prices from falling too far.

Finally, as always in the oil market, there is an unknown — in the form of the Iran-Iraq war. It looks increasingly likely that Iran will emerge as the victor in the seven-year-old conflict. An Iranian victory would unnerve Iran's Arab neighbours even more than in the past. Iran would place great pressure on Saudi Arabia and its friends within OPEC to cut their production quotas in order to raise oil prices to well over $20 per barrel.

Chances are, however, that if OPEC were to attempt to restore prices to the $25-$30 level in the short term, many of the problems of yesteryear would return to haunt OPEC. On the one hand, exporters worldwide would relax their guard and be tempted to over-produce. On the other hand, hopes of a gradual rise in oil demand would be pushed further and further into the horizon. An Iranian-inspired OPEC might well be able to push oil prices into the high 20s. However, whether OPEC could sustain prices at such high levels would be altogether a different matter. □

Mehdi Varzi is Assistant Director (Oil Research) Kleinwort Grieveson Securities.

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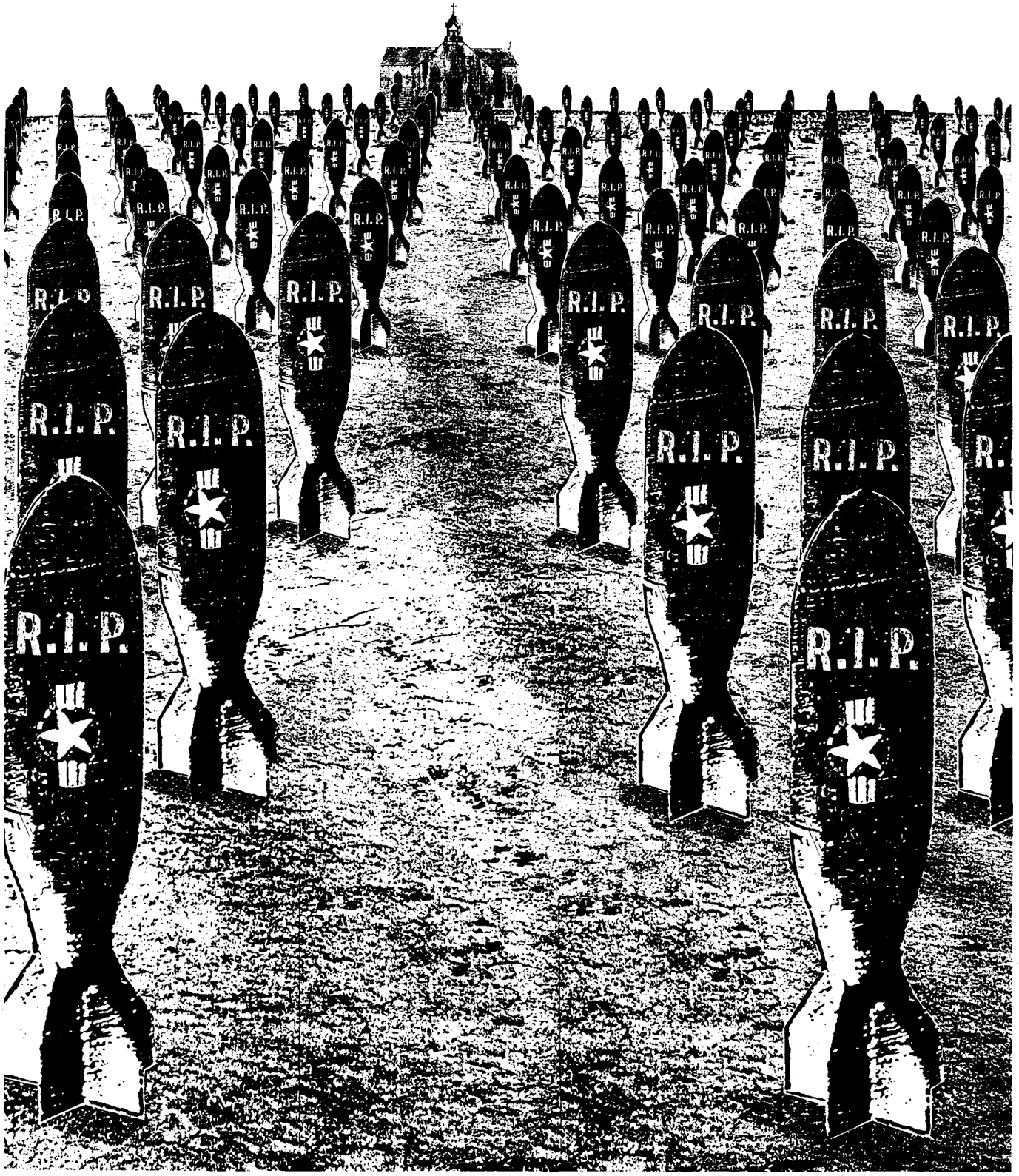

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Taking up arms against media shadows

As the Labour Party rallies in Leeds, **JOHN RENTOUL** *previews the battle against the spectre of the Loony Left — and a breakaway 'Moderate Labour Party' in Nottinghamshire*

THE LABOUR PARTY has a number of interlocking problems to tackle at its local government conference in Leeds this weekend. It has to turn back the Loony Left slur on Labour councils — picked out by the Audit Commission report last week — and to keep the Loony mud from sticking to parliamentary candidates in marginal seats, where two recent opinion polls suggested Labour was doing badly.

The Leeds conference is designed to bring together Labour councillors to talk about the local elections on 7 May: every voter in England and Wales outside London will be asked to re-elect either one-third of their district council or all of it. But, coming after last weekend's launch of the Liberal/SDP Alliance's revamped general election campaign image — prime gold and Purcell — Labour's leaders are also using this platform to sound their general election trumpet.

The Tory targeting of Loony Left councils is a national election issue as much as a local one, and the meshing of national and local factors is well illustrated by the formation of the 'Moderate Labour Party' in Nottinghamshire.

Fortunately for Labour, the new party in the heartland of the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers is not as significant as Labour's opponents can have wished — or indeed expected. In fact, insofar as it is formed out of disillusionment with both the Labour Party and the Alliance, the Conservatives are the only existing party who can be pleased with it.

The Moderate Labour Party consists of seven people who claim 40 supporters and is (so far) limited to the mining town of Mansfield. Its founders are Michael Gallagher, who was Labour Euro-MP for Nottinghamshire until he defected to the SDP in 1983 and who wasn't re-elected in 1984, four Mansfield Labour councillors (including two members of the UDM) who were deselected for the May elections by their local Labour Party branches, and two 'Independent' councillors, Christine and Steve Taylor, who resigned from the SDP in a row over parliamentary selection 18 months ago (*NS* 21 February 1986).

The Moderate Labour Party is unlikely to have much effect on the 30-seat Labour majority on Mansfield council, although it intends to contest 30 of the 46 seats in May. But it is possible that Gallagher would like to run against 'hard' leftwinger Alan Meale for Mansfield's parliamentary seat. Meale, ex-secretary of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, is defending Labour rightwinger Don Concannon's 2,216 majority over the Conservatives.

And although Mansfield council can hardly be labelled Loony Left — a handful of UDM members are still Labour councillors — the Moderate Labour Party is trying to fix the label on neighbouring Nottingham city council which featured as one of the 'spectres haunting Kinnock' in the *Sunday Mirror* two weeks ago for its gays-only periods in swimming baths.

Apart from its — usually fairly muted — hostility to the UDM, the only specific change made against the Labour Party in the Nottingham coalfield — repeated to me by Gallagher and John Liptrott, the new general secretary of the UDM — is that the Communist Party used to be quite strong in Nottinghamshire and no longer is. Some former members of the CP are even members of the Labour Party now, Gallagher pointed out.

The UDM has not decided its official attitude towards the Moderate Labour Party but it's likely to be friendly, and the union is balloting its members on the setting up of a political fund later this year. Liptrott says 'I'm not a member of any party, but I wouldn't close any doors', and he wishes 'more power to their elbow'.

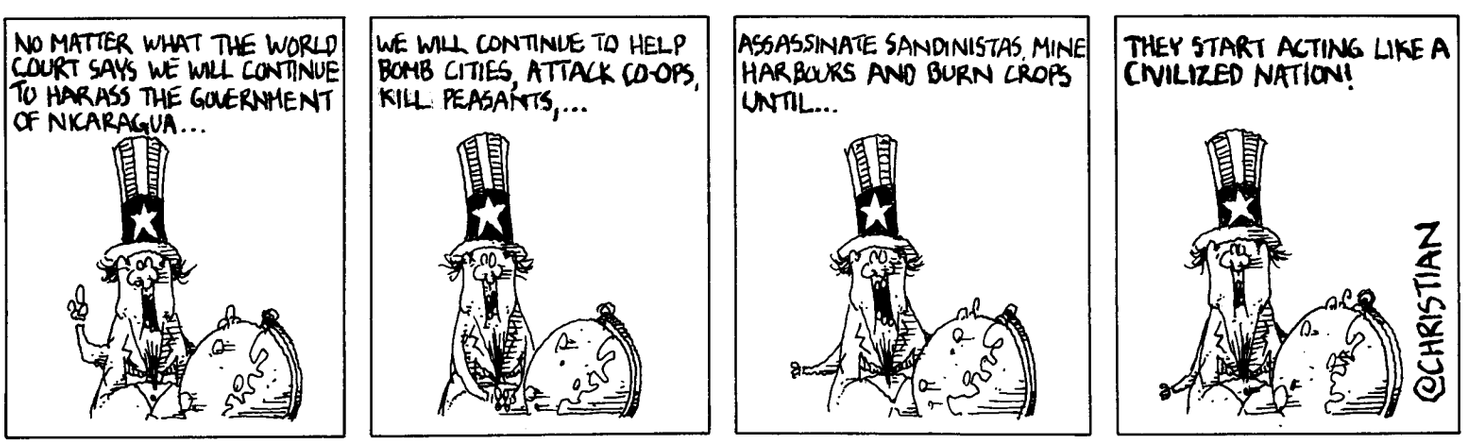
Alan Meale's problem, then, is a fairly isolated one. Sharon Atkin, a black Lambeth councillor disqualified in the rates rebellion of 1985, is also likely to be targeted as a hard left parliamentary candidate in Nottingham East, as is Val Veness, ex-deputy leader of Islington, in Nuneaton. But scrutiny of marginal seats which Labour could win with a swing of less than 5 per-cent throws up no other prominent hard leftwingers.

Labour councils have also done a reasonable job against the howling wolfpack of the Loony Media, which was thrown off the scent a little by extensive leaking of, and attacks on, the Audit Commission report before it was finally published last week. The report purports to prove, as most people who care know by now, that a group of eight inner London Labour boroughs are badly managed when compared with two 'control' groups: a group of eight other London boroughs (either not Labour-controlled or not in inner London) and a group of the eight most deprived Labour councils outside London. The eight 'target' councils are all run by 'new left' Labour parties.

Not comparing like with like

To prove that they are badly managed — let alone that they are badly managed *because* they are run by Loony Lefties — the report would have to show that the 'target' councils spend more than others, taking into account different costs, levels of service provided and degrees of social need. This the report does not do. It accepts and makes an arbitrary adjustment for high salary costs in London, but otherwise simply asserts without evidence that its analysis 'compares like with like, and excludes the effect of policy and other variables outside authorities' control'.

The targeted councils disagree, and quote statistics to show how different their problems are (*London's Financial Problems — Response to the Audit Commission*, Association of London Authorities). For example, 70 per cent of inner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WE WILL CONTINUE TO HELP BOMB CITIES, ATTACK CO-OPS, KILL PEASANTS,...
ASSASSINATE SANDINISTAS, MINE HARBOURS AND BURN CROPS UNTIL...
THEY START ACTING LIKE A CIVILIZED NATION!
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London council housing is high-rise blocks, compared with 35 per cent for the next highest concentration in Manchester.

Further doubts surround the selection of the 'target' and 'control' groups. The 'target' group were chosen, according to a spokesperson, 'because they were the ones which the district auditors have expressed the most concern about'. But, writing personally here as a resident of Tower Hamlets, its inclusion in the relatively well-managed category seems bizarre. On the basis of Tower Hamlets alone I would say the Commission has confused 'well-manged' with 'low-spending'.

Ultimately, though, it's not a rational argument about spending or deprivation indicators. The 'Loony Left' theme can be a disguise for racism, sexism and homophobia, but it can also touch chords with people who are none of these, yet who are alarmed by left rhetonic and practice. □

The irony of protecting the people

Labour councils have shielded their electors against the worst effects of Government policy, argues* DAVID BLUNKETT, *leader of Sheffield City Council

THIS WEEKEND'S conference in Leeds will be more than a rallying platform for Neil Kinnock to start an offensive against the Conservative government. It will be an opportunity to display Labour's commitment to a radical alternative to *both* the present government *and* past centralist solutions.

Local government will show the contribution it can make to the future of job creation and economic regeneration, and at the same time display the real success of Labour councils in acting as the dike against Tory tide, eating away at public provision and the role of local democracy. Labour local government has been in the vanguard of creative ideas at a time when the pressures on local communities and those representing them has never been greater.

The Conservative government is very happy to take credit for the efforts of Labour authorities who have maintained some semblance of acceptable provision in education and personal social services; it has even attempted to show that public spending cuts have not involved as great a reduction in investment in these key services as opponents claim. *But without Labour local government which they so roundly vilify, the Conservatives would be facing an unemployment total and a level of social deprivation which would severely impair their chances of winning the election. The greatest irony of Labour's achievements in local government is that while protecting the people, it has also shielded the Conservatives from the full consequences of their own intentions.*

Labour has accepted the responsibility for employment and the wellbeing of the people; the Conservatives, in rejecting it, have put aside a role accepted by governments since the Second World War.

The contest of the next 12 months is between those who believe that government has not only a responsibility but a duty to ensure that democracy works in the interests of the people as a whole, and those who see it as a tool for facilitating the operation of the marketplace, irrespective of the consequences.

Sheffield is an example of a council where maintaining services and defying government wishes has saved as many as 7,000 jobs. The £71 million which the government now demands that the city cut from its budget directly and indirectly provides 7,000 jobs. By refusing to cut to the government's expenditure level fixed for the council for the coming year, Sheffield will save not only jobs provided directly (home helps, teachers, recreation and construction workers) but also jobs in those private companies dependent on local authority purchase of materials and equipment. If the 7,000 jobs were to go and the unemployment totals in the city pushed up from 46,000 to 53,000, the cost to the Exchequer in redundancy and benefit payments would be a staggering £42 million, and to the city council £5 million, besides the loss of tax and insurance contributions which people in work make to the community and the nation.

Government capitulation

Yet the government has had the cheek to embrace the higher spending which local government has maintained, by including it in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement, and again in the recent Public Expenditure White Paper. Last July, Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, announced that the government was willing to concede that the completely unrealistic cuts it had been demanding for seven years could not be achieved, and part of the sums involved were therefore to be added back into public expenditure planning forecasts. Cuts which had been resisted by the actions of local government, against the wishes of ministers, were heralded as a commitment to increased public spending by the government.

THE FIGURES from the Autumn Statement show a prediction of a further 6.8 per cent cut in public housing investment, a 16.4 per cent in personal social services development spending, and a standstill in cash terms on spending on repairing, improving and developing schools and education facilities. Figures are calculated in cash terms and therefore fail to take account of predicted inflation. The percentage of grant paid to local government for the services carried out on the ground continues to be reduced, and the system of withdrawing grant where authorities spend more than the government wishes means that those councils holding up their spending can find themselves actually paying money back to the Exchequer rather than receiving it!

One final twist in the tale illustrates the duplicity which currently passes for government policy. Councils have, over recent years, been restricted to only being able to use 20 per cent of the 'capital receipts' which is the money raised from the sale of housing, or 30 per cent from similar sales of other property and land, but such receipts are now counted by government in their public expenditure calculation. They have estimated that local authorities last year should have had available £6 billion of such receipts.

In the Autumn Statement, they upped this to £8 billion and counted the extra £2 billion as part of the supposed expansion of public spending plans. Of course, those authorities hardest hit and in the areas of greatest deprivation and unemployment have already used their receipts to try and maintain the programmes which the government has been on the one hand attempting to curtail and, on the other, is now seeking to claim credit for. For those in greatest need, therefore, selling off assets which no longer exist is not an option available to them.

The truth is that Labour has a great deal to shout about in the achievements of local councils facing the most enormous odds over recent years. It would be a great pity if the fringe activities of a very few councils were to provide the Conservative front bench with the smoke to screen those very real achievements. □

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Buchan replies to his critics

Neil Kinnock has stymied efforts to create an innovative and forward-looking Labour Arts policy claims

NORMAN BUCHAN, ***until recently Shadow Arts Minister***

WHAT AN INACCURATE, offensive and bizarre article the *New Statesman* carried on me (*NS* news pages 23 January, 'The lone song of Norman Findlay Buchan'). The whole language and tone suggests that I am too old and therefore past it, out of touch, unable to understand and communicate with new developments in the arts and cultural industries: that I alone said broadcasting should be included in a unified arts ministry, and by posing this 'unrealistic goal', and 'ambitious plan' provoked a fight to ensure my sacking in a blaze of principled glory. What nonsense!

But it does bear the imprint of a carefully, designed 'office of disinformation' exercise. The classic technique of this is to develop a series of false but believable conclusions on the basis of a single known and accepted truth. The truth here is that I am in my sixties and Neil Kinnock is in his forties. Therefore, it must of necessity follow that I am out of date and have a 'fuddy duddy, middle-aged approach to cultural affairs' as opposed to the dynamic, swinging Neil Kinnock who valiantly tried to bring up-to-date a 'soporific' and 'deadly dull' document.

Following from this, the *NS* makes a number of extraordinary assertions about me and Labour's Arts Charter, but, significantly, there is only one direct quotation. It is a crucial one, for it is on this quotation that the writer bases his case. As it happens, it is inaccurate. Four words are missing either deliberately to make a case or because the writer has been misinformed. But the intention in either event is clearly to deceive. The writer quotes from the Charter: 'The potter's wheel should not remain silent after four o'clock.' It actually read: 'The potter's wheel *in the Art Department* need not always stop at four p.m.!' (my italics).

That's from a section headed 'Education and the Arts'. The whole paragraph reads:

> 'We will encourage the development of community schools so that along with a continuing adult access to education there will be a continuing access to the cultural resources of the school. The potter's wheel in the Art Department need not always stop at 4 p.m.!'

So a perfectly sensible comment about using cultural resources is first distorted, then crucial words omitted and then it is removed from its context. This is not a minor quibble, because it is this that allows the writer to deduce his main conclusion about me and the Charter:

> 'Ideologically its roots lie in some mythical past when enlightenment went hand in hand with handicraft: 'the potter's wheel should not remain silent after four o'clock'. That Norman Buchan could not, apparently, see that such a sentence (happily amended) stood for a complex of redundant attitudes, says much for the wisdom of his replacement.'

The image of the fuddy-duddy, ancient craftsman in the Cotswolds is complete, convincing — and it is all a lie (including incidentally, the 'happily amended').

TAKE THE *NS*'s portrait of me, solitary and 'obdurate', holding out against a mass of 'concerned party members' valiantly preventing the removal of broadcasting from the Home Office. First, I know of no such mass of party members. I know only of Gerald Kaufman, Shadow Home Secretary, John Morton, general secretary of the Musicians' Union, and, astonishingly, Neil Kinnock himself. The truth is that this is already accepted wisdom virtually throughout the entire arts, media and trade unions, as well as party members 'concerned' with questions of freedom. Since 1977 it has been Party policy and in more recent years argued for vigorously by Arts for Labour and Red Wedge.

Neil's boot

This case is accepted now — by the Liberal Party, the SDP and unanimously by the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Arts with its inbuilt Tory majority. Astonishingly, the Labour Party which pioneered this policy has now been placed — not be me but by Neil — to the right of all of these. Ironically, members of the PLP Arts Group with their Chair, Mark Fisher, had for many weeks been seeking a meeting with Neil to try to persuade him to draw back from his amazing *volte face* on this issue and to support my position on it.

The writer seemed to imagine that all this was a solo effort by me and appears to be ignorant of the developing support over these last ten years. But worse, he or she did not bother to check with either me or the joint secretaries of the Working Party, the accuracy of their information. And the writer seems neither to have read the Charter nor Neil's actual amendments.

Here we come back to the reverse image. The *NS* news item talked about 'a conflict between outmoded attitudes and an awareness of new possibilities'. And this is true. But in fact it was Neil who put down amendment after amendment in support of 'outmoded attitudes' and tore the guts out of a reasonably coherent policy package based upon 'an awareness of new possibilities'. And it was me who was defending what the article demands in relation to the cultural industries, 'the myriad developments in electronic dissemination . . . of access, of training and experimentation, of a "hands-on" approach to participation. And it was Neil whose amendments were turning us back towards 'the supine "building of audiences" which has preoccupied the Arts Council', which your article rejects — as I do.

The amendments were consistent in their reactionary nature. Neil sought to remove the idea, praised by Naseem Khan in your back pages (23 Jan.), of the Open Cultural University. In another amendment he seems to have confused the use of the arts in education with the question of specific 'musical and other artistic tuition'. Throughout he showed a curious desire to return to the concept of centres of excellence, in place of our proposals to secure a wider role for our national institutions.

Neil had, I think, one useful amendment: three paragraphs stressing the importance of the involvement of youth. In a sense this was the final irony and indeed tragedy of his position. While genuinely emphasising an arts policy for young people he was at the same time destroying the possibility of a fully interlinked culture of broadcasting, film, video, TV, radio, sound recording — on which so much of present day youth culture is based. He should have come with me to Leicester to see young people patching together their own sound recording studio in a disused warehouse. To Swindon to see young people learning to use video cameras a a means of expression, almost as we used to learn to write. To Newcastle to see the highly developed newsreel and film and video young production groups. Or visit the Nottingham Media Centre.

Neil is still talking of giving 'immense' powers to the new Arts Ministry outside 'regulatory' powers. In the event he hasn't given them any.

BUT THERE IS another aspect to all this — the political rather than the cultural, if they can be separated. Is it not ironic that the very weekend the *New Statesman* prints this item rubbishing the concept of taking broadcasting away from the Home Office, it is invaded by the Special Branch in pursuit of a ban on the freedom of broadcasting and the press? And that the Minister in charge of that Special Branch — the Home Secretary — is also the Minister entrusted with the defence of broadcasting freedom? And is the irony not redoubled when in that same weekend we see the Metropolitan Police in a mounted charge at Wapping — a force in the charge of the same Home Secretary who under the same Broadcasting regulations is entrusted with the defence of press freedom?

What a tragedy it all is! If Neil had stood at the despatch box and simply said 'Whatever else has emerged over this last week one clear truth has been established: it is time to take broadcasting and press matters away from the Home Office . . .' then support behind him would have been overwhelming. And no one could have bounced it off better than Neil.

Your correspondent is right in one thing: I am no Jack Lang (former French Culture Minister). For one thing, I don't like his damned pyramid. But Neil could have been. It just requires a bit more courage. A bit more imagination. A little bit more of listening to those who know their subject and who are on his side. My guess is that the necessary three or four points we now desperately need in the polls can only come from positive pro-Labour votes. Wilson pulled it off in 1963 and '64 through ideas and imagination. Neil could do it so much better because I believe he can re-discover a greater conviction. There is not much time. 'Imagination au pouvoir' was always a good slogan. □

We apologise for having had to hold this reply over for a week.

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Stephen Butler

What Ernest says

Sue Miller

THIS IS WHAT Ernest whispers to her. 'You ever had a man to go down on you? How you like me to be going down on you? How you like that? You like Ernest to eat you out?

You ever suck black cock? How you like suckin me off?'

When Miss Foote calls on her, she is sometimes so confused that she just stares back. Her mouth hangs open, and she doesn't answer. The children laugh. They are glad to see her make a mistake. She is too smart, too big for her britches. Miss Foote calls her up after class. Why is she having so much trouble right now? Miss Foote used to be able to count on her. 'You were someone I could rely on, Barbara, when I wanted an example for the other children.'

Miss Foote's breath smells overripe, sweet, as though she had had cheese for her lunch several hours ago.

She doesn't look at Miss Foote. Just at her desk, the neat heaps of papers graded and stacked up. Barbara always gets *S*, superior, on her homework.

She tells Miss Foote she is sorry. She says no, she doesn't know what is wrong. Just sometimes now she has trouble concentrating in class. *Move me*, she wants to say, but she knows she mustn't ask to be moved away from the black kids. Her parents would be ashamed, so ashamed.

At recess the black kids gather under the viaduct. The white kids stay closer to the school. The white kids don't like the black kids. They say bad things about them. They call them *nigger, jigaboo*. Barbara's parents have told her they don't really feel these things, that they have learned them from their parents and don't know any better. Barbara's parents have told her the black kids are just as smart, just as good and nice as the white kids, they just need time and encouragement from the teachers to catch up. They say it is a shame that Miss Foote has all the black kids sitting together in the back of the room. They are glad Barbara is sitting next to them. They ask her if there is any one black child she talks to or has gotten to know.

Ernest, she tells them.

'Oh,' her mother says brightly. 'A boy. How interesting.' ▷

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When Ernest leans forward his breath is warm and sticky on Barbara's neck. She can feel her hairs stiffen in response, and a queer vibration passes down her spine, as though a part of that knotted bone had become, momentarily, gelatinous.

'I see you on 55th this weekend, girl, and I call to you. You din answer me. You din hear me?'

She cannot even shake her head no. She wasn't on 55th this weekend. She stayed home, except for Sunday when she went to church, the church her parents belong to, where she is in a confirmation class. Though this church is in a neighbourhood where many blacks live, very few of them come to the church. In Barbara's confirmation class, there are only white kids, three white girls, and Dr Wilson, who has a tired face and a kind, hoarse voice. She stayed home all weekend except for church and her mother said, 'Isn't there somebody from school, some nice girl you'd like to have over?'

'The wind be blowin your skirt on 55th, and I think I seen your pussy, girl. Is that right? Did you show me your pussy on 55th. This was Saturday, I believe?' His tone is so friendly, so conversational, that Barbara sometimes believes she makes up the words, the dirty words in her own head. But how can she? She didn't know those words before he said them. She didn't know *cock, pussy, suck, eat*. Still she isn't sure what they mean, or if he really said them. Did he say them? Maybe he was saying something else. His accent, their accents are so thick sometimes she isn't sure what he says, what any of them say. When they talk together, she can understand almost nothing, but the girls' bright screams of laughter tell her it is all right, what they say to each other. Then it occurs to her, perhaps they are all laughing at her?

In class, Miss Foote asks a question. She calls on Sterling Cross. Barbara looks over at him, next to her. His face is blank. It is as though Miss Foote hadn't called on him. He blinks. The white kids have turned around to look at him. They wait. He scratches his head. His pale brown fingers make a soft noise Barbara can hear. Miss Foote calls on Ernest. Barbara's chair is attached to Ernest's desk. She feels it move slightly, but that is all. She knows how his face looks. Impassive, black, no one could expect an answer from it. The radiator hisses. To Barbara it seems that minutes have passed. Slowly she raises her hand. Miss Foote won't look at her. She is waiting for one of the black kids to answer. Barbara waves her hand.

'His accents, their accents are so thick sometimes she isn't sure what he says, what any of them say. When they talk together, she can understand almost nothing, but the girls' . . . laughter tell her it is all right, what they say to each other.'

Suddenly Miss Foote says in an irritated voice, 'Barbara, you will have to learn you can't always be the center of attention.'

Barbara is the smartest girl in class. There is one boy who is probably as smart as she is, Jimmy Nakagawa, but he won't talk when he is called on. He laughs to himself and shakes his head, so Miss Foote never calls on him at all anymore. Barbara and Jimmy Nakagawa never speak to each other, and hardly anyone else ever speaks to either of them. Barbara's parents' friends are always surprised when they hear where she goes to school. 'She does just beautifully there,' Barbara's mother says. 'The instruction is really almost as good as in a private school, and we like her to meet all different kinds of children. She even has a special friend among the black children, a little boy named Ernest.'

She is the smartest girl in confirmation class too. They are studying the sacraments, communion. Dr Wilson says communion is the central ritual of Christian life. He reads Christ's words: 'Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' He asks the girls what the sacrament of communion means. No one raises a hand or says anything. He looks at Barbara. Barbara has studied this. She knows the answer, but cannot remember it. The room is silent. Dr Wilson looks angry and tired. He begins to answer his own question. The next Sunday Barbara is sick and doesn't have to go to church or confirmation class. She stays in the house all weekend.

'Hey girl. I be waitin for you last Saturday. You told me you meet me under the viaduck and I wait for you maybe three hours.' Barbara shakes her head in confusion. 'Why you tell me that when you not goin to meet me, why you do that?'

She never looks at Ernest when he talks to her, but she knows how he looks, she can imagine his mouth as she feels his humid whisper. It is as pink as bubble gum inside, his tongue is pink too, his lips slowly turn pink as they curve into his warm mouth.

Sometimes at recess Barbara stands near the viaduct and listens to the black kids. There are three girls who sing together, Norma Jean is one of them, and Barbara likes the way their voices move so close. Their voices almost touch each other but don't. 'Red hots, french fries,' they sing, and clap. 'And chili macs.' Ernest is smoking a cigarette. He sees her looking at him and says something to James. They laugh.

Barbara tells her father she doesn't want to be confirmed. She doesn't feel ready to take communion, to drink the blood, to eat the body of Christ. Her father is understanding. She will go to church with them on Sunday still, but not be confirmed, and, for now, stop the confirmation classes. 'What's most important,' he says to Barbara, 'is to listen to your own inner voice.'

Sometimes he doesn't speak to her for days. Behind her back, she hears him talking, laughing, with James, with Sterling, with Norma Jean. She waits for the pause, the break, then the softer, moist voice near her head. She listens to the silence behind her when Miss Foote is talking. She stares intently at Miss Foote's moving mouth, the gold teeth in the back flashing occasionally. She listens to Ernest's breath behind her. Miss Foote calls on her and she stares and doesn't answer.

Miss Foote is upset and sends for her mother. Her mother is concerned. Perhaps there is some physiological problem. Barbara goes to the eye doctor, the ear doctor. The ear doctor whispers at the back of her head, 'Can you hear this?' His breath is cool, but it stirs the hairs on her neck. 'Yes. Yes,' she whispers back with her eyes closed, like a lover in the dark. There is nothing wrong with her, they say. It's nothing organic.

Ernest's desk is empty. Barbara leans back in her chair and watches the door as the latecomers straggle in. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Miss Foote calls the roll and then talks about Ernest. His sixteenth birthday was the day before and he won't be back. Miss Foote says this is a Tragedy, that Ernest should have tried to finish eighth grade anyway, that people should always try to finish what they have begun. She talks about how Ernest is hurting his chances forever to be a success, to make something of himself, by quitting now. She hopes everyone in this classroom will finish eighth grade, whatever their age, whatever their background or skin colour, and think about high school, and even college.

In her seat, Barbara tries to hide the slow tears starting down her face. □

Sue Miller's novel The Good Mother *was published by Gollancz in 1986 and will be available in paperback, from Pan, this spring. 'What Ernest Says' will be included in her collection* Inventing the Abbotts, *to be published by Gollancz on 7 May.*

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When the Wind Blows (PG)
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NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST is the great unrepresentable of our time. Governments rely on its unimaginable nature to prevent us thinking it could happen — not because we don't know, intellectually, that nuclear war is possible, but because we literally can't picture our daily world not being there.

This creates certain problems for any visual representation of nuclear war. How can you make believable something so unbelievable? Anything too horrific appears merely as science fiction, anything too 'normal' fails to present the terrible dangers. Realist films like *The War Game* or, more recently, *Threads*, do give a sense of the horror that could follow nuclear exchanges but their very realism links them too closely to the life we are used to, almost as if TV cameras would still exist after the bomb dropped.

For all these reasons the idea of an animated film about nuclear destruction is a promising one. **When the Wind Blows**, based on Raymond Briggs' best-selling cartoon book, relies on a range of complicated animation techniques to present us with the drawn characters of Jim and Hilda Bloggs (John Mills and Peggy Ashcroft) in the three-dimensional setting (based on photographs) of their house. Strangely, it is the two-dimensional simplicity of the Bloggs which gives the stronger sense of 'normality' as they have all the cosiness of familiar cartoon characters, whose personalities are fixed. They talk in an exaggeratedly homely way of the 'here's your tea, dear' kind — which is clearly meant not so much to be realistic as to *represent* the stability of ordinary life, and in particular the well-meaning, gullible natures of the Bloggs.

This gullibility is central to the film's one basic device: which is to show the Bloggs doing in complete faith ('This must be really authoritative, it's from the County Council') exactly what the government pamphlets tell them, down to the last letter. The film's poignancy is intended to lie in the naivety with which they dutifully build their shelter of old doors and lay in their supplies — as if preparing for another WWII air-raid.

A sort of ancillary to this device, which is repeated so often as to lose its charge, is the Bloggs' unperturbed dialogue in the devastation *after* the bomb. There must be a dozen lines of the 'I'll pop out to the chemist tomorrow for some suppositories' . . . 'I promised old George I'd see him in the Half Moon for a game of darts . . .' variety. Once would have been enough; the point is made.

And it *is* made: the film does succeed in suggesting that mix of the everyday and the unimaginable, through its picture-book simplicity — a bit like setting Chernobyl in Noddyland. But the fact that there is basically a single script idea — that described above — makes it hard for the material to hold up for full feature length. The combination of attention to realist detail in the photography-based depiction of the house, with the crude (if affectionate) caricature of the figures in it, feels bizarre, and feeds into the key problem of our relation to these characters. It is obvious that we are expected both to laugh at them, and feel real concern for them, and the two responses don't mesh. There is a patronising note to any amusement they might provoke (though it is hard to feel that any of this could be really *funny*); on the other hand, the necessity of the characters' simplicity for these 'jokes' to work prevents the production of real feelings about them.

Ultimately, it is hard to get a sense of who the film is *for*. Is its audience CND supporters, or is it aiming to convert those wedded to nuclear defence policy? Is it for adults or children? Will people see it for entertainment or education? These questions leave one with a curiously disjointed relation to the film, even while sharing its aims.

Rate It X by Lucy Winer and Paula de Koenigsberg is another film with one basic device: in this case, that of giving individual men (ranging from a baker who makes cakes shaped like women's torsos, to the author of *Hustler*'s grotesque 'Chester the Molester' cartoon) enough rope to hang themselves, letting them reveal their own sexism, while the filmmakers appear as discreetly gloved hands holding microphones. The simple economy of the device produces far from simple results: some of the men — particularly the editor of a black 'men's' magazine — grapple with the contradictions of their positions; some happily expound grossly misogynist attitudes; some strive to find what the interviewers want of them ('Oh, I see what you're getting at,' says one old war veteran, with relief).

What the film lacks is any mediating concept of ideology. These men don't just 'have' sexist attitudes; in a more complex way, 'being a man' itself involves layers of — for want of a better word — sexism, and this is structured into both consciousness and society. Instead of exploring those connections, the filmmakers act rather like teachers, who ask you questions to which they already know the answer. Perhaps this is what gives the film its slightly irritating tone.

The question 'who is it for' applies to *Rate It X* as much as *When The Wind Blows*. It makes most women feel righteous anger; I'm not sure how it makes men feel but by focussing on particular individuals I would imagine that it tends to let any 'sympathetic' man going to see it off the hook. Can an ideology be revealed merely by letting it speak for itself? A good device is a good device, but it cannot make an entire film. Perhaps for filmmakers *this* is a message to be learned from the forms in which this week's films put their own, important messages across. □

Two major events at the Everyman, Hampstead: their 'Golden Age' season of French films of the Thirties, including many fascinating classics which are out of distribution in Britain, runs on Mondays through February and March (with two rare Jean Gremillon films plus Renoir's *Rules of the Game* on 9 February); and their 'Making British Movies' Sunday afternoon screening/ discussion series, continues with a preview of Horace Ove's *Playing Away* at 4.00 on 8 February followed by a discussion with Ove and lead actor Norman Beaton. Further details from the Everyman on 01-435 1525

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WORK IN PROGRESS

The sound of mime

Naseem Khan

THE THOUGHT OF a forum for mimes calls up all sorts of delightful images: gesturing, passionate, white-faced people chucking custard pies at the panellists; Keystone Cops chases around The Place (for it's there that the forum was held); Chaplinesque walks and finally, maybe, a fine piece of Buster Keaton pathos — signifying the marginal position of mime.

For marginal it surely is, in the popular opinion. But how accurate is that opinion? The view at the open forum, with which the 9th London International Mime Festival closed, was rather more positive.

According to veteran critic Fernau Hall, mime is in a golden age, akin to a similar age in ballet when there was also a disparity between poverty of funding and creative wealth. The good-sized audience of mimes and friends looked cautiously surprised at this accolade; difficult to accept after a decade of self-apology. They began slowly to test it for size — the Arts Council's allocation for mime is due to go up by 40 per cent — and to feel — the Cork Report saw mime as a success story in a moribund avant-garde — that there might — the Mime Festival packed out its eight different venues — be something in it. Mimes, it seems, are on the move, marching out of the tight little corner, surrounded by invisible walls, into which Marceau had boxed them.

On the debit side was the press (the *Observer*'s short, damning review of the Festival was brandished angrily at the forum); the fact that, even with the forthcoming rise, mime still gets a poor relation's share of the Arts Council cake (the bright company Trickster has already died of starvation); the fact that mime still exists as a rider to Dance departments in funding organisations; the fact that its image is still negative.

If the world at large had been at the Festival, views would surely have changed. The variety of work in this lively overview of the state of the art could not have failed to make its mark: text-based work such as Ben Keaton's 'Memories of an Irish Taxidermist'; wordless, masked mime such as Trestle's 'A Slight Hitch'; layered, worded work, part parody and part expressionism, like David Glass's 'Dinosaurs of Weltschmertz'. Mimes danced, mimes sang. They swung on ropes, talked, shouted and generally behaved in a most unMarceau-like manner. What, the world might ask, has it all come to?

Not mime, protested a furious customer, who'd stormed out of David Glass's piece and who intended, said the Place's director John Ashford, to sue the theatre in the Small Claims Court for breaking the Trades Descriptions Act. And indeed, if not silent, what *is* mime? Opinions ricocheted back and forth across the Place's auditorium. Desmond Jones staunchly summoned Etienne Ducroux, one of the great progenitors of mime, with his insistence that the body should be the instrument of expression. 'It's a polluted art (now),' cried an older woman: time was when one or two gestures could say more than a page of text. 'We walk by a straight wall and we start imitating the wall, and that,' said David Glass, rather more enigmatically, 'is what mime is.' Mime, offered David Gale (ex Lumiere and Son) is an inherently conservative art that has gone from the classical to the post-modern with no modern age in between. What is this talk of isms? thundered mime practitioner and teacher Desmond Jones. 'We shouldn't be talking about "neo-classicism" and "post-modernism" and "Stanislavskian objectivity". We all know what mime is when we see it. We should be out there doing it!'

Jones was right. The richest part of the debate and of the events I saw in the preceding Festival related not so much to definitions of mime as to its capabilities. There is no question that mime has been resolutely pushing back the boundaries over the years, so that only a hair's breadth (if that) separates it from other forms of theatre. Who's to say, for instance, what stops Performance Art groups like Hesitate and Demonstrate and Hidden Grin from being mime? Or performers like Annie Griffin? For it is not so much the non-use of words that characterises the work, as a particular use of physical movement, providing a dimension often (though not always, for there's change there too) missing from conventional theatre. It's the relationship between the various elements — a particular kind of dynamism — that is striking. Theâtre de Complicité, for instance, use a contorted style, pushed at times to the limits of acceptable realism, for their awful, tawdry fables of everyday life in the graveyard or at the altar. Holland's van Hemelrijck delegates movement. At the ICA, as part of the Festival, he constructed an environment of palings, flower pots, plantless arid earth, through which his audience made its way before coming face to face with the performer — inside a large, glass case.

Words, sound, movement, music came together at the festival in different ways ('Language,' suggested critic Judith Mackrell, 'mediates between gesture and the known world.'); the fluidity was what mattered.

Mime has placed itself, in short, at that best and most uncomfortable position for artists: at a crossroads. From that position it is well placed to make raids into neighbouring territories: into circus or vaudeville, avant-garde or parody, drama or dance.

The problem of where, for the sake of neatness and Arts Council categories, the creature calling itself mime should be located, turns out to reflect more on Arts Council limitations than on the nature of mime. Slippery and ambiguous, it gives *every* sign of not knowing its place: which might infuriate bureaucrats, but is very good indeed for the art. □

Next week: Mass Observation.

TELEVISION

Austins and jaguars

Hugo Williams

THE CHARACTER of the Seventies should be dimly perceptible by now, but it's hard to imagine them ever achieving quite such a distinctive personality as the Fifties, the last pre-teen decade, when nicely brought-up lads dressed as middle-aged men and jumped into the back of the Austin when they were told to.

An awful lot of the energy of Michael Palin's **East of Ipswich** (BBC2) has gone into recreating this bulbous, obedient, erotic period with its distant rumblings of breakout, so that a lot of our admiration is squandered on the waxwork effects director Tristram Powell has had to wheel into place for us to gawp at. The car clearances, for instance, must have been a nightmare to maintain; the McGill-esque, roll-trousered, beach-cricket scene was almost too absurd to be true. This is an occupational hazard of the era; with so many beady-eyed witnesses still about, our time-courier gets it wrong at his or her peril. One thinks of Nicholas Ray's superlative **Party Girl** (BBC2), shown last week along with his equally impressive *Johnny Guitar*. This was a recreation of Thirties gangster Chicago done in blatant Fifties style just before fidelity to period detail, which started with *Bonnie and Clyde*, became something of an obsession in the business.

I don't think it is fanciful to suggest that the Fifties were an adolescent decade with all that age's melancholy subversion and alarms. It was appropriate, therefore, that *East of Ipswich* had an adolescent hero and Edward Rawle-Hicks brought such an uncanny insight to the part of Richard that I started to imagine his own experience of the Eighties must be offering him some kind of sympathetic parallel to work from, in which case God help us.

The danger was caricature; different levels of exaggeration appearing all over the place, dislocating the action. The film was like its own ledged and promenaded seafront in this respect: Richard's parents were cartoon characters and far too old, surely, even for those fuddy-duddy days. Their accents, too, sounded uncertain of where they stood, in relation to the landlady for instance. By contrast, the other boys and girls were rather modern in outlook. Priding oneself on such observations was on one of the pleasures of a film whose principle virtue was its writing. 'I'd rather have gone somewhere spoilt,' says Richard as the Austin rolls up at the boarding house in unspoilt Southwold.

Sex is everywhere, but it was a truly Fifties gesture, betraying its author's own age, to make the one girl who goes all the way a Dutch visitor. Our hero is discovered *in flagrante* by half the cast, but it was worth it. As the Austin leaves in disgrace, he recalls with his first knowing smile his headmaster's pep-talk: 'Once your body rules your brain the finest education money can buy will be of no avail.' *Hail, hail rock 'n' roll!*

The Bandung File (C4) is one of those programmes that got its channel boss on the short list for DG last week. It's a black interest show with wider application. Last week they had black

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advocate Courtney Griffiths describing some of the perversions of his profession. Of an equal number of whites and blacks held on remand last year, nearly twice as many blacks as whites were ultimately found not guilty, which amounts to saying that the police are sentencing blacks to prison without (before) trial. When black defendants see Griffiths' colour they groan and say, 'Who sent you along?' Black lawyers are more popular as prosecutors on such cases, for obvious reasons, or with white defendants accused of racism. It was amusing to hear him adopt refined Jamaican vowels for speech with some young rastas. 'Debate' suddenly became 'dibeat', 'Whales' became 'Wheels', 'play' 'plea' and 'story' 'starry'. This dialect is often used by black cockneys to reinforce damaged racial pride; it must erect barriers too.

I turned to the programme to hear Salman Rushdie talk about his new non-fiction account of the Nicaraguan revolution, *The Jaguar Smile*, blithely trailed by the channel as a 'novel' called *The Jaguar*. It seems the country has a high respect for literature and Rushdie was able to meet the president, vice-president and foreign minister, all of whom write poetry. The country was possessed by ghosts, he told us. There is an empty plinth where the equestrian statue of Somoza once stood, but the statue itself had originally been an old one of Mussolini, bought on the cheap, with the face changed.

The most familiar ghost is that of Augusto Sandino, of course, his face disappearing under the famous stetson. Rushdie described this emblematic piece of headgear, which appears everywhere in the country, as an infinity sign with a volcano coming out of it, just like one used to draw at school. 'Time and fire . . . to all intents and purposes Sandino has become his hat.' He maintained that Nicaragua is a country where Christ is still far more important than Marx. 'It doesn't feel like a Soviet-style economy. Sixty per cent of the industry is in private hands, which compares favourably with the United Kingdom.' *The Bandung File* is one of those unpredictable magazines which occasionally reminds you of thinking.

Most underrated programme around at the moment is **The Mistress** (BBC2), a fast-moving modern triangle which cheerfully accepts the banality of its once-tragic theme, thereby freeing for comedy a whole range of wishy-washy sentiments and taboos from old Hollywood which many other would-be contemporary shows still labour to uphold. The one-liners came too fast for me to take down. □

THEATRE

Playing dirty

Victoria Radin

IS JIM ALLEN'S play *Perdition*, which the Royal Court has suddenly cancelled, anti-semitic or racist? Let me quote a passage that was deleted from the script at the last moment:

> *Lawsen:* I assume Counsel for the Defence is not suggesting Jews are cowards in an emergency [the 'emergency' he is referring to is the Holocaust] . . .
> *Scott:* That will be for the jury to decide.

Who is this jury who will decide this, by definition, racist issue? As the stage directions specify, the jury is us, the audience.

Perdition is cast in the form of a courtroom drama, an authoritarian and particularly manipulative genre. Bewigged and begowned barristers parade an assemblage of purported facts before us; a judge, clothed in scarlet, sits above. The momentum derives from the skill of the barristers/hunters in stalking their quarry and the audience's own urge to see justice done, or vengeance. It is exciting and, when applied to the subject of the Holocaust, sensational stuff indeed.

A competent writer of the form will balance the two sides so that each genuinely has a case — otherwise there is no drama. He will also find it necessary to use sound logical principles and to write speeches which conceivably could be uttered in a courtroom. Jim Allen ignores these ground rules. The facts, too, which he presents to his British audience — who are unlikely to be *au fait* with details of Jewish behaviour worldwide during the Holocaust — are apparently, at best, misleading. At worse they are false, as Allen tacitly acknowledged when, very late in the day, he made insertions and deletions, some of them concerning major events, to the rehearsal script. These were apparently based on the reports made over a year ago by two historians, Dr David Cesarani and Martin Gilbert, which were commissioned

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respectively by the Royal Court and by the Manchester Library Theatre (who withdrew from co-production after the report was compiled). Both condemn the script. The Cesarani report also states that *Perdition* 'does satisfy all criteria by which anti-semitism is normally recognised'.

The play is set in a British court in 1967. The fictitious Doctor Yaron, a Hungarian emigré, is prosecuting the invented Ruth Kaplan, an Israeli emigré, for libel sustained in her pamphlet accusing him of collaboration with the Nazis.

The setting of the play in Britain makes it appear as if the issue of collaboration had never been raised in Israel. But Allen's play is based on the public trial, 12 years before the date of his play, of Dr Rudolph Kastner, a figure in the then Labour government of Israel. On his behalf, the government sued for libel a right-wing supporter of the Irgun terrorist group, who had accused Kastner of collaboration with the Nazis. In this internecine struggle the government lost their case; a few years later they appealed successfully. Kastner's alleged collaboration continues to be be debated in Israel, where a play about it was staged last year. Jim Allen makes his own use of the controversy. Although his work constantly cites Kastner in pursuit of its anti-Zionist thesis, Allen makes no mention of the Israeli trial until the end of the script, when he suddenly brings it in as evidence against Yaron.

But the truly guilty parties in Allen's trial, as he makes relentlessly, repetitiously clear, are Zionists (whom the text, as we have seen, sometimes confuses with 'Jews' or 'Jewish leadership'). Using frequently offensive language (the 'Jewish leadership reacted [to the Nazis] by flopping down on all fours. Grovelling, servile, obedient') he charges his characters to condemn both the people who believe in Zionism (which he collates into a single monolithic ideology) and the state of Israel (which he perceives only in terms of its present policies).

The script constantly nudges one to see resemblances between the Jews and the Nazis. The Jews of the Holocaust were (in a phrase one associates with the Nazis, which Allen uses several times) 'carrying out German orders'; they were (in the ancient tradition of anti-semitism) 'sacrificing' their fellows' 'blood'; they even 'comprised a Zionist knife in the Nazi fist'.

My last point on the script itself is undoubtedly the strangest. The end of the last version of it discloses that the ostensible opponents Yaron and Kaplan were actually in collusion all along for the purpose of fixing a show trial to indict Israel. Yaron additionally appears revealed as some kind of nut who has seen too much Christian iconography. He perceives the word of his indictment as 'hard as nails'; he talks of 'a tall black crucifix of a woman'.

The subtext of *Perdition* builds shrilly to the suggestion that the Jews not only somehow deserved what they got from the Nazis ('Our Zionist (*sic*) tradition impels us to save the few out of the many') but that they even, in some analysable way, were responsible for the horror they suffered. The remorseless unveiling of unpalatable events unleashes a kind of rage in the reader, which would be stronger still in a spectator. One searches for an outlet and 'blame' is a word that Allen has continually attached not to the Nazis, but to the Jews/their Jewish leaders/Zionists. It is the venerable psychological mechanism by which the victim stands accused: the rape victim of soliciting violence; the unemployed of foolishly obeying false trades unions.

Perdition is a nasty play. The question to be asked is not why one man wrote it, or even why Stafford-Clark persisted with it against all historical advice and then performed his last-minute *volte face*, but why he ever wanted to stage it at all. The Royal Court, which has been an institution worthy of one's greatest faith, stands against racial prejudice. One cannot imagine that it could produce a work whose theme was slaves colluding with their masters, or one which revealed that the current politics of India or Pakistan somehow fulfilled all one's darkest thoughts about Asians. What made them think the Jews don't need the same kind of respect as other minorities? Could it be a kind of double-think? As one writer who had read the script admitted to me privately: 'British anti-semitism, particularly among the left, is a can of worms. *Perdition* provided the can-opener.' □

MUSIC

Dead Souls

Jon Savage

THE OTHER WEEK I tuned into *The Tube* — more from habit than desire — and promptly lapsed into reverie, only to be roused by the sound of people chanting, shouting and generally showing signs of life unusual to that programme. They were heralding the last act: a group of four ugly, male, post-punk survivors affecting the long hair, coy references (at several stages it was possible to see, among the cosmetics, the 'DRUG' scrawled upon the singer's guitar) and apocalyptic rhetoric of the late Sixties 'underground bands'.

In themselves, the Mission (who currently have a top-ten hit with, suitably, 'The Wasteland') were distinctly uninteresting, but what they had, almost unwittingly, set in motion among the audience was. As their fans — both male and female — swayed on each others' shoulders, threw confetti-sized pieces of paper and generally wigged out, being a Mission fan looked like *fun*. To me, this represented a real change: the fact that the young audience, some of whom weren't even born in 1969, were prepared to lose control with such minimal encouragement was an index of a deep lack in pop and its current interpretations.

About seven years ago, I did an interview with the backline — good musicians all — of Malcolm MacLaren's then pet project, Bow Wow Wow. In an exchange of mutual nervousness, the only thing that stood out was when the drummer talked, animatedly, about being a Soul Boy. In the midst of post-punk angst, this seemed like a fresh idea. Pop was, at that time, hamstrung by introversion and depression (Ian Curtis, a key figure, had just committed suicide): the bright colours and simple, non-intellectual activity of the Soul Boy — with his insistent cry, 'Fuck Art. Let's Dance!' — seemed like a real alternative.

Since then, the Soul Boy ideal has bossed English Pop. On a musical level, it has resulted in the white assumption of Black dance forms that, in the hands of acts like Duran Duran, Culture Club and the Eurhythmics, has been responsible for the world-wide spread of English Pop (for the third time) since the early Eighties — a development most welcome to a domestic music industry bruised by Punk. It has also resulted in the increased access that English listeners (and consumers) have had to a flood of excellent Black American dance music and, by further implication, the broadening of taste that has made African and other world music popular. These are positive benefits.

It is important, however, to distinguish the music itself from the meanings and interpretations that are erected upon it: for this is where the problems start. The Soul Boy myth has also bossed Pop Culture, ever since the 'style' magazines that began in the early Eighties based their appeal on a sharp, street-wise, laddish, metropolitan view of the world, where the cut of your trouser, or entry to the correct nightclub, opened the door to a new world of desire. At the same time, Pop history was rewritten to include accounts of Northern Soul and the mid-Seventies East London Soul Culture that, apparently, was the 'true roots' of Punk. The message was clear: cool, control, but above all pride — in the emblematic words of Curtis Mayfield, 'Move On Up'.

But Style Culture — like the definition of postmodernism that it embodied — had a fatal flaw: in its obsession with the minutiae of style, in its very aspiration, it failed to develop any political or theoretical distance from wider economic and social trends. Style Culture quickly became the cutting edge of a Thatcherite consumerism and social mobility: its traces can now be seen in pop videos, all over Fleet Street, and in what my be its pinnacle — the Nick Kamen Levis' advert. Perceiving this lack, the Left has attempted to hijack Soul Boy 'community' and ally it to older ideas about musical 'authenticity' (whereby Soul, like Reggae was ten years ago, is valued for its 'real', 'roots'-like qualities). But this account founders on the reality of Black dance music production, on the base desires that are at the heart of Pop, and on the very conformity and conservatism of the Soul Boy (and Style Culture) myth itself.

Like Style Culture, the Soul Boy myth is dead, obsolete. In the space torn between styles, what interests me is not 'a return to rock' — in America, it never went away — nor the unholy mixture of hip-hop grossness with the received sexism of heavy rock, but the chance that there is for the voices that have been excluded by Style Culture's metropolitan bias to make themselves heard. There is a new, uncharted area of youth culture: it might include the Rock fans or Goths that populate any provincial city or small town — it's no accident that the Mission come from Leeds, a Goth stronghold; it will also include another group which, because it is not organised in consumption, is not deemed worthy of media attention. These days, this means that it might as well not exist. Yet any observer will have noted a large amount of people — disparagingly called 'hippies' — who operate like the *Wandervogel* of the Twenties, moving from town to town, from festival to 'Peace Convoy', outside the bounds of 'normal' society. Any future account of pop culture must include their bohemian wanderings, which are a true index of consumerism in crisis. □

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Books

FICTION

An illness called Austria

Martin Chalmers

Gargoyles
THOMAS BERNHARD trans. RICHARD & CLARA WINSTON *Chicago* £5.95
The Lime Works
THOMAS BERNHARD trans. SOPHIE WILKINS *Chicago* £6.75
Wittgenstein's Nephew: A Friendship
THOMAS BERNHARD trans. EWALD OSERS *Quartet* £8.95

IN GERMAN-SPEAKING Europe, Thomas Bernhard is both celebrated and notorious. Considered to be one of the most outstanding contemporary authors, his work and his public life have also been an unceasing provocation and insult to his surroundings. The objects of his disgust and mockery include most Germans, nearly all Austrians ('The Austrian is through and through national socialist and Catholic by nature . . .'), doctors (and especially psychiatrists), actors (and especially actors in some of his own plays), producers, publishers, subsidised writers, civil servants and politicians. He has frequently been taken to court for libel. He is entirely unreasonable, immoderate and *ill*-mannered. The Waldheim debacle can only have fuelled and confirmed his prejudices.

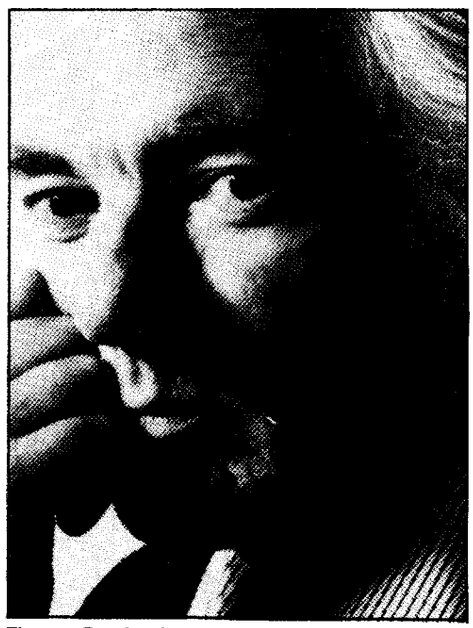
For more than 20 years, Bernhard has maintained an enviable output of novels, stories, plays and autobiography, despite his own judgment that 'to publish anything is folly and evidence of a certain defect of character'. It is a body of work which is extraordinarily unified, both in its themes — illness, dying, isolation, the punishment of familial relationships, the inability of language to communicate — and in its frequently labyrinthine discourse.

In an early story, Bernhard describes a man just released from prison: 'Like those of all [who are] subordinated, excluded, his speech was clumsy, everywhere open, comparable to a body full of wounds, in which anyone at any time can scatter salt . . . ' Bernhard has been determined to avoid such vulnerability in his work, even though his own body has been repeatedly vulnerable to illness. In **Wittgenstein's Nephew** he writes: 'When I rebel or resist, when I have to take arms against the world's outrageousness, I do not wish to be the loser, to be annihilated by it.'

It would be wrong to see Bernhard as a 'political writer'; the radical or reformer cannot take any more comfort from him than the conservative Catholics of Austria. It would also be mistaken to take his art of hyperbole entirely at face value. Like a great comic or clown, his tragedy can always turn into comedy, even if grotesque, and vice versa. And despite the grimness of Bernhard's themes and the perfection of his prose readers will frequently find themselves taken unawares by laughter: 'This was the fourth crime this year in these parts she said, and reminded Frau Edenhöh of the strangled potter, the throttled schoolmistress, both from Ligist, and Horch, the Afling furrier, who had been shot. Unpacking the bread and butter, she said: "It's the sultry weather."'

Gargoyles and **The Lime Works** are both relatively early books. *Gargoyles* (1967) still has elements of conventional narrative (although it climaxes in a 120-page reported monologue). It also crams a whole sequence of little horror stories into its simple framework of a student accompanying his father, a country doctor, on his rounds. Stories which uncover the fairy tale's fear of nature.

Bernhard has no time for a sentimental view of the goodness of nature, of nature as health. Such a sentimentality is based on an ignorant sense of superiority. Illness is as much nature as health; is, indeed, the 'fist-sized tumour' in Bernhard's thorax at the beginning of *Wittgenstein's Nephew*. Perhaps the most consistent of Bernhard's provocations is to confront the illness, death and incapacity which the late 20th-century sensibilities have tried to ban from (everyday) life.



Thomas Bernhard: unreasonable, immoderate, ill-mannered

The Lime Works (1973) has the same archaically timeless setting in the desolate hills and forests of Upper Austria as *Gargoyles*. Virtually the whole book is now a single reported monologue (almost like evidence to a doctor or a court) unravelling backwards from a murder. After years of isolation and the failure to write a definitive work on 'The Sense of Hearing', the private scholar Konrad has shot his crippled wife. The novel reports on the increasing desperation and impoverishment (almost everything in the house except 'the Francis Bacon he had bought in Glasgow' and the piano had been sold) of their 'chained-together' life. The novel concludes that Konrad's decline and inability to write his masterpiece were due to his lack of 'the fearlessness, simply, when it came to turning his head over, suddenly, from one moment to the next, ruthlessly flipping it over to drop everything inside his head onto the paper, all in one motion'.

Bernhard's style is at first sight perhaps somewhat strange. He composes and arranges rather than plots his work. There is little description, characterisation, direct speech or action; he proceeds by making an incident or insight the theme for variation and modulation before leading into the next theme. It is a very musical approach to the writing of prose. The spiralling sentences, which exclude any other reality except their own, which allow no objective position, are a product of a scepticism of the truth expressible in language. At the same time it produces writing which, even in translation, is a pleasure to read aloud, which is always capable of surprise.

Wittgenstein's Nephew is much more recent (1982). It is much lighter than the earlier novels — perhaps surprisingly, since its subject is a friend dying — much closer to the conventional material of autobiography and memoir. The writing rage comes as less of an attack and is moderated by tenderness and regret. Paul Wittgenstein, nephew of the famous philosopher and, like him, despised by a wealthy family, was one of the few Austrians who could share the extremity of Bernhard's abstentionism and match his mental and physical pain. And yet as Paul dies, Bernhard, the narrator, like the other former friends, is unable to cope with it, and participates in the discrimination against the sick by the healthy. Perhaps, he tries to argue with himself, he does not visit Paul out of a desire to avoid embarrassing his friend.

Like virtually everything Bernhard has written it is remarkable, not least for its outrageous comic scenes (the scandal that Bernhard achieves on accepting a state literary prize, for example; a futile chase through the Austrian countryside for a foreign newspaper). And the more one reads, the more each individual work grows in force and reverberates with the others. However, much, much more still remains to be translated of Bernhard's unique work on our unending 'last days'. □

FICTION

Dear reader

Grace Ingoldby

The Heart of the Country
FAY WELDON *Hutchinson* £8.95

HOME TRUTHS NEVER have much zing. Abuse may be 'hurled' but home truths, blunt and thudding, are 'delivered' — and, in Fay Weldon's latest novel, the reader is on the receiving end. Set around Glastonbury, her tale 'of the wickedness of men and the wretchedness of women' is a game

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of consequences: what happens when Harry leaves Natalie, a silly woman whose only 'cred' is with the delicatessen. With Thatcherism in full swing there's little need for the 'primitive malevolence' that so undid Liffey in *Puffball*. This is the age of 'two legs bad': of computer consultants, Hinkley Point, illegally imported agricultural chemicals, intensive pig-breeding units, unemployment, divorce, professional malpractice. For *Heart of the Country* read state of the nation; all the gang are here.

Abandoned with two children, a Volvo and a dog, Natalie, as is obvious from her shoes, is never going to cope. Peep-toed heels are for enjoying life, not 'for the getting through'. Natalie is as silly as a Victorian doll: 'All wide eyes, smooth cold skin and silent blinking.' So silly that Sonia, who points her in the direction of the DHSS, could kill her and very nearly does. It is Sonia, single parent, lentil-eater, who tells this story. 'You can't get blood out of a stone', she suggests as the DHSS motto, but squeezing the stone properly helps. Natalie must cease to be a supplicant and become a claimant: 'You mustn't talk about wanting this or that, about your feelings or pride or whatever. You must talk about your rights as a citizen half the time and cry the other half. That gratifies them both ways.'

Natalie has no grasp of society — by which Sonia means men, 'for who else regulates our lives?' — and is particularly vulnerable to the real villains of the piece, Arthur the antique dealer and Angus the auctioneer, a double-act and comic relief with a place on every committee and a finger in every pie. These 'robber barons' think up the carnival float in which both women become so fatally involved: a 90-ft monster of lace-curtained estate houses adorned with real women in frilly aprons waving feather dusters, the epitome of the consoling myth 'the loving female in the dreamhouse' and the highlight of this book. Actually, it is hard not to warm to the barons altogether, although Arthur smells of Antiquax and would sell his wife at the right price and Angus drives a Quatro and wouldn't know a lentil if it hit him on the ear.

Weldon's an astute and witty chronicler who doesn't miss a trick — it's sadly fitting that Sonia's sanity should land her in a madhouse and that Natalie's story should become therapeutic for her in turn — but her style remains professional and chatty; her tone, as in her *Letters to Alice*, at once intimate and from the plinth. Her prescriptions for coping, for instance, read like Shirley Conran's *Superwoman*, except that instead of 'Don't polish floors, seal them,' we read: 'If you're thinking of going on social security why not cook and eat the dog?' And bracketed statistics punctuate the prose — Unemployment among the rural under-25s . . . 60% of men . . . 43% of women . . . — making this less a novel than a message from someone who knows and cares about what's happening at the front.

Sonia rejects a happy ending — 'No. She must get on with changing the world, rescuing the country. There is no time left for frivolity.' But it's neither frivolity, nor Weldon's habitual lack of sentimentality, that are missing here. It's that her characters inform us but don't make us care, while readers looking for the rough magic of a novel get short shrift. The facts are right; the chemistry is not. □

SCIENCE FICTION

The future is male

Josephine Saxton

SCIENCE FICTION publishing appears to have been in hibernation recently: there is little to review, on my desk at least. Much of what there is reads greyly, lacking in sparkle and precision; without insight, poetry, revelation, prediction — bereft, in fact, of the very *stuff* of sf at its best. Aware that my impressions could be a consequence of post-flu *accidie*, I searched diligently for excellence.

Ingested pre-flu, I found in Kate Wilhelm's **Huysman's Pets** (Gollancz, £9.95) a thriller with the slightest of science themes embedded, a sort of downbeat *Avengers*, and written unnecessarily from a male viewpoint. That an evil genius, Dr Dohemy, acolyte of the dead and suspect Huysman, is studying human genetics, telepathy between twins and experiments upon captive children is not the dominant theme. Wilhelm has chosen to keep it as a sinister background for a very involved plot and sub-plots including the hero's persistent seductions of his ex-wife. I might have liked it more had not her tortuous syntax held up the sense-flow so often, and if the proof-reading had been more thorough (this last a frequent fault in Gollancz books).

That was hard work, but a tougher task lay ahead. I failed to finish James White's **Star Surgeon** (Futura/Orbit, £1.95) mid-flu. Re-perusing it later, with sense of humour partially restored, I thought it even worse. Written by an MD, it is a doctor-nurse romance, but with the patients somewhat more in the foreground. Understandably when 'The patient being brought into the observation ward was a large specimen — about one thousand pounds mass, Conway estimated — and resembling a giant, upright pear.' Obesity problems? Not quite: 'Five thick, tentacular appendages grew from the narrow head section and a heavy apron of muscle at its base . . . five large mouths were situated below the root of each tentacle, four with plentiful supplies of teeth and the fifth housing the vocal apparatus.' Plus, the patient is guilty of having eaten its cabin mate and has skin cancer. Sf ethics at its stickiest; at best *Star Surgeon* bears the message that we must treat all living creatures with kindness and respect. Displaying great imagination and knowledge, like much sf it would make a brilliant movie in the right hands,but is rotten literature.

Its message is the reverse of Robert Sheckley's **Victim Prime** (Methuen, £9.95), which is best seen as a bit of fun in gruesome taste. Not worth climbing a high horse for, it depicts a ruined America in which a hillbilly hulk named Harold sets out on a hazardous (bandidos, chemical waste, cannibals, *et al*) journey to the Caribbean, where, in the Huntworld Stakes, cash prizes sufficient to rescue the folks back home can be won — if you kill enough of your competitors. These *Rollerball*-style gladiators are slightly more insane than those in the Japanese television series *Endurance*, in a check-shirted-buddy manner. A trivial tale of violence, power, more violence, ending with sworn enemies in one another's arms as one dies quoting Shakespeare and Harold wins the whole shebang. If I lost my sense of humour reading it, the author does not — there are still vestiges of his former wit in there somewhere, still traces of earlier magic.

Which I was devastated to find untrue of a collection by one of my former literary gurus, J. G. Ballard. **The Venus Hunters** (Gollancz, £8.95) made me realise how very *asleep* I must have been 20 or even fewer years ago, with regard to insufferable male attitudes in fiction. I admired Ballard above all others, for his *Drowned World*, his surrealism and his experimental approach. I failed then to analyse why I found his work not only disturbing, but hurtful.

These stories are rife with the traditional sf Old Boys mannerisms: male characters known by surname; description of females by age, shape, hair colour, graded as desirable possessions; the action, while at least not mere raygun fighting and planet-and-female raping or rescuing, still exclusively centred upon male activity. The self-conscious if impeccably written '60 Minute Zoom' chilled my spirits utterly, for reasons that the Ballard who wrote it could never know. Should we overlook repellent attitudes, and be grateful for the rarity of excellent prose, and unique perceptual anomalies captured in story form? Reservedly, I think yes, but this book belongs with rose petals, champagne corks and souvenirs of fallen heroes. The title story, however, still says something pertinent about the idiocies of scientific method and attitude.

After this saddening encounter, I anticipated a bit of hell with Roger Zelazny's **The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth** (Methuen, £2.50), dreading the cheapened myths and forgetting his better and valid reworking of archetypal stories. Again, though, read the title story at your peril should you be a feminist with a weak heart. 'A Rose for Ecclesiastes' is perhaps the best here, in which an ace-Renaissance intellectual/poet/scientist investigates a dying Martian

Profumo

Paul Muldoon

My mother had slapped a month-long news
embargo
on his very name. The inhalation
of my first, damp
menthol fag behind the Junior Common
Room.

The violet-scented Thirteenth Birthday card
to which I would affix a stamp
with the Queen's head upside down, swalk,
and post to Frances Hagan.

The spontaneously-combustible *News of the*
World
under my mother's cushion
as she shifted from ham to snobbish ham;

'Haven't I told you, time and time again,
that you and she are chalk
and cheese? Away and read Masefield's
Cargoes.'

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matriarchy, falls in love, but is rejected for all except his sperm, resulting in a poignant pregnancy. Wimmin!

Incidentally, the covers of both the Methuen titles I've mentioned so far are trash. I thought there was a movement afoot to elevate the status of sf, with or without the sf warning logo; quite apart, that is, from the efforts of American academia, which has tunnelled away at the genre for years. One million intense seminars later, we have, from Methuen, and this time with a respectable jacket design, a deeply serious analysis of four works, the theme of which is Utopia. **Demand the Impossible** (£20), by Tom Moylan, discusses work by Joanna Russ, Ursula K. LeGuin, Marge Piercy and Samuel R. Delany. I cynically speculate that if, as an experiment, sf novitiates read these deeply academic analyses first, before the work, many lurid and formerly scorned books could evoke the same awe accorded to overpraised 'mainstream' novels. It might even be possible to discover as much meaning as does Tom Moylan.

It was a lesson to me; I vow to try reading more between the lines in future, because of late I have found little to delight and illuminate in the lines themselves. And I am now totally recovered from the virus, thank you. □

SOUTH AFRICA

Fistful of rands

Martin Bailey

Black and Gold: Tycoons, Revolutionaries and Apartheid
ANTHOHY SAMPSON *Hodder* £12.95

SOUTH AFRICA IS THE LATEST area to be explored by Anthony Sampson, the expert investigator into how big business gets involved in politics. Sampson's story could hardly be more topical. Following Barclays' recent withdrawal, in boardrooms across Britain companies with substantial investments in South Africa are now seriously considering the option of pulling out. Those who decide to stay are feeling under increasing pressure to emphasise the 'constructive engagement' approach, arguing that they are at the forefront of reform.

Sampson, who went out to South Africa for four years in 1951 to edit *Drum* magazine, has a long experience of the divided country. It was at this time that he got to know the African National Congress leaders Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. But Sampson is probably even better placed to analyse the corporate end of the story. Over the past two decades he has become an expert on multinational companies and the fascinating way that they play politics.

The most revealing sections of *Black and Gold* describe the confrontation of the tycoons and the revolutionaries. The July 1985 meeting between South Africa's top businessmen and ANC leaders in a Zambian game park was conducted in a flurry of publicity, but what has not been revealed before is an equally important gathering which took place in London last June over lunch at the Connaught Rooms. Presiding at the head of the table was 68-year-old Tambo, looking 'less like a terrorist than a reverend (which he nearly was) or a kindly uncle'. Surrounding him were the captains of British industry. Unilever took a low profile at the lunch, not wanting to draw too much attention because they were 'conscious of their huge investments in black Africa'. Consolidated Goldfields, Cecil Rhodes' old company, was one of the less likely participants. They were worried that their involvement in South Africa would hit their growing interests in China.

Britain's two major oil companies had welcomed the meeting. BP had already initiated contacts with the ANC. Shell, according to Sampson, had recently been approached by a South African concern interested in buying their investment there. 'They were quite tempted; but they decided they should stay and "keep chipping away" at apartheid.' Shell's chairman was only too aware that the company was facing an international boycott campaign over its South African involvement. Following the Barclays' withdrawal, it is now the number one target of the international anti-apartheid movement.

The bankers were naturally the most important guests. Barclays and Standard Chartered chairmen each took turns to talk privately to Tambo. 'Do they *both* want to be bankers to the ANC?' asked one of the guests.

Lord Barber, the chairman of Standard Chartered, received most attention as an 'eminent person'. He had just returned from South Africa as part of the Commonwealth EPG mission and he admitted privately that he regarded the outlook as grim. Seeing apartheid on the ground as an international fact-finder, rather than from the comfortable perspective of a banker, had been a disturbing experience. Astonishingly, as a Tory and a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, his signature was on the EPG report, which effectively called for sanctions — although it was a near thing, according to Sampson. Lord Barber had 'wanted to produce his own minority report; but after consulting the Foreign office and modifying some of the "nasty words" he agreed to sign a unanimous report'.

The Zambian meeting and the London lunch set the scene for Western governments officially to meet the ANC at ministerial level. It also represented an acknowledgement that the nationalists had to be recognised as the key element in any solution to South Africa's deepening crisis.

Sampson's excellent contacts on both sides of the racial divide have enabled him to investigate the relationship between business leaders and black politicians. He traces their contacts, from their first encounters a century ago up to the present, but rightly concentrates on the last eight years since P.W. Botha has been prime minister. His account of South Africa's debt crisis is particularly revealing. The banks' refusal to keep credit lines open was to have a greater effect on the South African economy than sanctions.

Sampson also provides a fascinating account of the divisions which have plagued BICSA, the newly-formed British Industry Committee on South Africa which was set up publicly to represent UK companies operating in South Africa. In its first year it has been paralysed by differences between member companies whose heads are 'above the parapet' and those who want to hide their involvement in South Africa. As a result, BICSA has now almost collapsed into inactivity at the very time when business needs to speak with a united voice.

Sampson's book ends up providing a rather narrow view of developments in South Africa because of his unashamedly elitist approach, concentrating on the men at the top. He reveals a lot about company chairmen, but virtually nothing about workers, either black or white. Tambo plays a key role in the book, but less is said about the young militants who are now forcing the pace of change in the townships. It is also a pity that Sampson does not probe deeper at the way British companies actually operate on the ground in South Africa. Have they effectively supported the apartheid system, as their critics claim, or do they now really represent a force for change?

Despite all this, Sampson has provided an excellent study of corporate diplomacy in the apartheid state. Surprisingly, it is also the first popular book on the role of British companies in South Africa to be published for many years. It is, after all, our economic interests which have largely determined political policy. It is no coincidence that Britain has the largest investment in South Africa — and that successive British governments have been among the strongest opponents of sanctions. □

Martin Bailey is a reporter at the Observer.

CHANGES

In to the light

Ann Scott

Through the Break: Women in Personal Struggle
ed. PEARLIE McNEILL, MARIE McSHEA and PRATIBHA PARMAR *Sheba* £6.95

THROUGH THE BREAK is a complex, evocative collection of writings on 'experiences of personal upheaval' by women from a variety of class and race backgrounds. Beginning as an idea for a book about breakdown, it has widened out to include experiences of abortion, incest, illness, disability, separation, beating up and racist attack. The writings — some, for obvious reasons, pseudonymous — relate to a lengthy section listing information and counselling resources, while the editors situate the book within a conceptual framework of self-help. The 'Break' of the title, then, is as much break*through* and break*out* as breakdown.

It would be invidious to single out one or other of the contributions. In the main they take the form of reconstructed narratives, discursive flashbacks, with comments and suggestions about what helped in the process of getting well and staying well. Some — perhaps the ones which started life as taped interviews — are not structured around hindsight, but almost all embody the notion of a turning point and most speak of words or concepts — whether a sense of class or race oppression, or an awareness of a

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mother's suffering — which are now in the author's vocabulary but weren't at the time. Some are deeply upsetting, some abrasive, some dazzling, some interrogate the reader directly; others are knowingly assured in their construction — where, for instance, there is talk of 'our heroine', or a conscious shift from 'she' to 'I' in the telling.

The effect of reading these stories is cumulative, rather than one of sudden impact, and, if there's a recurring theme, it is in the descriptions of emotions concealed from the self, most usually a kind of 'suspension of feeling' which cloaks anger going back to earliest childhood. Indeed many of the women have such oppressed, depriving and sadistic backgrounds that it's hard not to wonder what pulled them through and how come their spirit wasn't destroyed. In fact many of them describe *small* but reliable networks of intimate support through a seemingly unendurable crisis, and this seems to be a key element in their survival.

For others, in addition or instead, there were lucky, almost chance encounters with a kindly person in whose charge they were: a ward sister, feminist social worker, progressive psychiatrist, Women's Refuge worker. For others there would be reading, or their own writing, often a journal; or a political identification which enabled them to organise their perceptions in a way that gave rather than took away strength, and is reflected in the clarity of their writing.

Through the Break sought to create a space for words, rather than to set up a correct line or to 'adhere to some unreal standard of writing excellence'. Naturally the level of sophistication varies — moving between one woman's 'Wot was my trouble?' and another's 'She felt her reasons were both necessary and sufficient causes for the act [a suicide attempt].' This variation in style was a source of pleasure in the reading, something I could notice and savour. But I found myself responding more critically to the differences in approach and underlying assumptions — and here lies my one serious reservation about some of the ways of thinking about experience represented in the book.

I think that the editors have conflated two slightly different structures of feeling in saying that 'the reality of women taking responsibility and control of their lives' is emphasised throughout. 'Control' there surely is, for the women become able to take decisions, give themselves treats, acquire skills, get out of mental hospital and so on; but the sense of 'responsibility' is more elusive, for it means both the same thing as control but something in addition too. Some of the (to my mind) more simplistic contributions — which speak of 'medical shits', or psychiatric states as simply matters of 'labelling' or 'so-called madness problems' designed to silence people — were the most enervating to read, and I think this is because nearly all sense of any personal agency in the situation is missing. The woman is only ever 'done to'. She seems to have no language with which to consider the fact that she too is active in the situation, that there is a possibility of her own unconscious collusion with it — whether it be in a compulsion to repeat painful relationships, or the need to set people up to fail, or whatever. Instead everything is projected outwards onto a bad external 'other'.

In fact there is nothing abstract in such a criticism. This more intricate view of 'responsibility' — which adds a factor to an equation, in no way suggesting that 'there isn't a real world' or 'there isn't bad medical or psychiatric practice' — derives from the experience of many women, like myself, who went into analysis or analytic psychotherapy within the last ten years or so and have been deeply influenced by the clinical and theoretical notion of interplay between conscious and unconscious processes, 'inner' and 'outer' reality, or inner 'structure' and outer 'world'. A way of thinking of this kind then informs one's response to autobiographical writing in other settings. *Through the Break* remains a powerful and moving testimony to the changes that women have been able to make in their lives. □

Ann Scott is an editor at Free Association Books and is working on a study of women psychoanalysts to be published by The Women's Press.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Not drowning

Val Wilmer

Head Above Water
BUCHI EMECHETA *Ogwugwu Afo* £12.95

AS A CHILD in her parents' Eastern Nigeria village, Buchi Emecheta listened in fascination as her 'big mother', her father's older sister, told stories around the fire. Initially she was terrified by the sight of this aunt, Nwakwaluzo Ogbueyin, whose ankles and wrists were weighed down with massive ivory, but she came to enjoy those visits for the warmth of fireside and family.

Sometimes it was Buchi's own story that was told, the history of a little girl whose father 'walked seven lands and swam seven seas to fight and kill a bad man called Hitilah'. Sometimes the tale was about monsterman Lorlu and his evil friend Burma who kidnapped Igbo husbands. It was years before Buchi realised that Nwakwaluzo was talking of Lord Mountbatten, under whom many Africans fought in WWII's Burma campaign. As this halcyon period of childhood is recalled in her autobiography, a glow permeates the narrative.

But autobiographies are not easy, as the author of the acclaimed *The Bride Price, The Slave Girl* and *Joys of Motherhood* acknowledges. Once you get past the early part, honesty can be problematic. Her first two novels, *In the Ditch* and *Second Class Citizen*, were thinly veiled autobiography, but now, without the pretence of fiction, she finds herself on stonier ground. Sometimes she treads carefully, sometimes she stumbles.

It must have been a relief, though, to admit that she was the 'Adah' of her earlier books: arriving in gloomy, hostile England to have her hopes dashed within hours; then to have her expectations of her husband damaged beyond redemption. His reluctance to work or consider her feelings caused her to leave him. This is hard for any mother of four, but a matter of deepest censure for an African wife. He visited her after their separation and another pregnancy resulted. Then, when she went to court to claim maintenance, he denied fatherhood. Refusing offers to help with conciliation from Nigerian friends and relatives, Buchi worked night and day to raise her five children while studying Sociology. She did so lovingly, with considerable success, becoming a writer in the process.

The realities of Black life here continued to shock her. She came from a background where education ensured respect and a future. Working with disaffected Black youth in Paddington, she soon realised that though she might have 'made it' educationally, she had done so at the expense of those failed by the education system. She recognised herself as having joined the Black middle-class, the buffer-zone created by whites to keep the 'sufferers' at a distance.

Her frankness about social issues has enraged some Black people in the past and there will be those who will dispute the advisability of her echoing the attitudes of certain 'popular' sociologists when it comes to young Blacks and crime. But she is nothing if not courageous. She admits when she was wrong, describes each learning process undergone. As her story unfolds,

Moon message

Julie O'Callaghan

I was following the dancing ball
of the moon until it hopped
into a cloud and hid.
Someone in my vicinity
was smoking in the No-Smoking car.
I'm surrounded by Irish people
and a lady nagging at her kid,
'Patrick, come on, we're getting off the train.'
I can't blame the Irish
for travelling on a train
in their own country —
it just surprises me
to be in such a foreign location.
Me and my Maxwell House paper cup
seem to be the only Yankee products
roaming to Limerick
through the peat smoke and bushes.
I like to think of the moon as a Yank.
He saw me looking out a car window
in 1967 coasting down the outer-drive
beside Lake Michigan.
I whispered something to him.
Tonight, for the first time
in almost twenty years
I can hear him answer back.

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it becomes apparent that her Sociology training has a good deal to answer for in shaping her analysis.

Head Above Water, self-published after difficulties with earlier titles, suffers from careless editing. Nevertheless, the story of her progress, sometimes blind and battered, as she drags herself out of 'the ditch', is educational material for those white feminists and others on the 'Black reality' bandwagon who cannot imagine hard times existing outside America's ghettoes and the Black Belt South.

Buchi admits she is not one of the world's greatest writers and, for sure, she is no Alice Walker or Virginia Woolf. But she has Nwakwaluzo Ogbueyin's blood in her veins and it is in the African story-telling tradition that her work should be seen. Libations of whisky were poured over *Second Class Citizen* when it was published, kolanut broken in celebration by Ibusa friends. She has suffered their criticism as she pursued her personal freedom, but is still a child of her people.

But her writing also comes out of another tradition. Long before Samuel Selvon, Andrew Salkey and E.R. Braithwaite, Africans in and outside the Diaspora were writing about this country. Mary Seacole's 1858 *Wonderful Adventures* is well known; Frederick Douglass' *Life and Times* too. Yet, since A.B.C. Merriman-Labour's 1909 *Britons Through Negro Spectacles*, there have been few opportunities, until recently, to read what 'they' think of 'us'. There's Ham Mukasa's 1904 journal of a Ugandan king's visit, Rollo Ahmed's idiosyncratic *I Rise*, Roi Ottley's *No Green Pastures*, extracts from the prolific J.A. Rogers.

Just as the earlier narratives of Africans-in-England, by Ignatius Sancho and Olaudah Equiano, were eagerly devoured in the 18th century, so Black books continue to find a growing readership. Many white readers are thirsty for a picture of any Black experience as an antidote to centuries of anthropological study. Equally, they are curious to read what Africans and those of African descent have to say about what Langston Hughes called 'The Ways of White Folks' — however bitter the pill may be to swallow. The publisher who told Buchi, 'Africa is out now, Australia is in,' will have little effect on curiosity of that kind. □

IRELAND

Provisional response

Eamonn McArdle

The Politics of Irish Freedom
GERRY ADAMS *Brandon* £3.95

GERRY ADAMS MP writes from the eye of the storm. As a republican activist in Belfast in the Sixties and Seventies and, latterly, as President of Sinn Fein, Adams has helped to shape the movement which has set the agenda for British-Irish relations and for Irish politics over much of the last twenty years.

The chief interest of his book, however, lies less in the testimony of the activist than in the forceful, often eloquent, plea it makes for the cause of Irish republicanism. Despite a disclaimer from the author to the effect that it represents neither a programme nor a manifesto, Adams' 'personal statement' must rank as the most considerable one to date from a leading member of the republican movement clarifying and defending its aims and methods.

It thus has a role to play as one corrective among others to the flow of misinformation — comprehensively catalogued by Liz Curtis in *Ireland: The Propaganda War* — that passes for journalistic analysis of affairs in the North of Ireland, both in Britain and in the Republic. A symptom of the malaise which the mere mention of Adams' name induces among senior broadcasters working for RTE — the state broadcasting station in the South of Ireland — was displayed in its recent banning of Brandon's radio ad for this book.

The form of *The Politics of Irish Freedom* is that of an extended essay. It combines a chronological treatment of some of the events and experiences crucial to the development of republicanism over the last 20-odd years, with a series of more thematic pieces and markers for future debates. Throughout, Adams offers the reader fragments of autobiography, reminiscence and discursive asides on the questions to hand.

There is a sacred history and a profane history. Today's IRA, Adams explains, takes its organisational origins from the forces which engaged in the Easter Rising of 1916, though its ancestry could be traced back further (1867, 1848, 1802, 1798). This is a kind of sacred history which has its parallel in that of socialism (1956, 1917, 1871, 1848, 1796). Here, though, he is chiefly concerned with the profane history: 'the circumstances which shaped the support for the IRA of today are above all the experience of the barricade days from 1969-72.' His account of these circumstances shows there was nothing irrational, atavistic or even peculiarly Irish in the resort to arms by beleaguered republicans.

The decision to rearm was prompted by the mounting threat to working-class nationalist communities as the crisis of the Unionist regime deepened between 1968 and 1970. Initially therefore a defensive reflex, the regrouped secret army began to wage a campaign against the British state in the North. The Republican movement has been committed to this path ever since, in the conviction that no amount of reforms within a six-county context will fundamentally change matters for Northern nationalists.

It is difficult to argue with Adams' claim that 'The tactic of armed struggle is of primary importance because it provides a vital cutting edge. Without it the issue of Ireland would not even be an issue.' Both the abolition of Stormont (1972) and the Hillsborough Accord (1985) would tend to confirm it. But Adams is far from any facile glorification of armed struggle or militarism, a charge commonly levelled at the Provos: 'IRA volunteers are actually civilians, political people who decide for short periods in their lives to take part in armed action . . . people who have consciously decided that armed struggle is a political necessity . . . (who) in a fairly haphazard way, train themselves in the rudiments of military capability. There are no careerists in the IRA. Republican volunteers face futures of suffering, imprisonment and death.'

If Adams' standpoint — the standpoint of the republican movement shared by a steady 40 per cent of nationalist voters in the North in elections over the past seven years — is unpopular in Britain, it nevertheless corresponds to the experience of decolonisation elsewhere in modern times.

The greater part of Adams' essay, however, is not a prolonged reflection on violence but an account of the reorientation underway within the republican movement since the late Seventies. Associated with the younger leadership of Adams, Danny Morrison and an entire new cadre of middle-ranking politicals in the North, this has been heavily marked by the impact of socialist and feminist currents and by the example of anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World. After a period in the Seventies when political debate within the movement was swamped by the clamour for a military resolution of 'the national question', republicans have been turning their attention to the building of a 32-county-wide radical movement, now seen as a crucial additional lever in the fight for a 32-county republic.

Electoral interventions in the South, on the model of their successes in the North since the hunger strike of 1980-81, appear to offer one opportunity for building such a movement. Hence the recent decision to drop the policy of abstention and register as a political party. Work within trade unions, community organisations — on the model of Concerned Parents Against Drugs — and with the unemployed, offer openings.

By themselves, however, such interventions would hardly spare Sinn Fein the fate of the Workers Party in the South, that of a left social democratic alternative to the moribund Irish Labour Party. The success of Sinn Fein's present orientation will depend on its ability to translate popular discontent in the South — at mass unemployment, mass emigration and penal levels of taxation of PAYE workers — into support for the radical nationalist challenge it poses to the British state in the North, the political establishment in Dublin and to their latest Anglo-Irish agreement. Recent experiences — notably the level of support throughout Ireland for the H-block/Armagh Campaign which climaxed at the time of the hunger strikes — serves as a reminder of the undoubted potential for such a movement.

It is not clear that it will have an appeal to 'all major sections of Irish society' as Adams hopes. At least since Connolly's time it has been abundantly clear that many sections of Irish society stand to gain from continued British domination of Ireland. But Adams' book remains a very useful introduction to the debates that will take place around the construction of a movement to end that domination. □

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Labour's loyal opposition

J. S. Ellison, London E4
Her Majesty's loyal opposition may become so loyal that it ceases to be an opposition. Neil Kinnock's prompt support for injunctions against Duncan Campbell's article and film on the satellite is both alarming and absurd.

It is obvious that the government-sought injunctions in defence of 'national security' will slow down the information supply to the British public but not to anyone else. Mr Kinnock's rationale — that Thatcher's claim to defend 'national security' should be credited until exposed as fraudulent — could, if intergreted widely, be read as an unwitting incitement to the public to vote Tory at the next general election.

Mr Kinnock should be as well apprised as anybody, socialist or otherwise, that in Thatcher's Thesaurus 'national security' is a patriotic cover word for Conservative political interest. He should be demanding publicity and political accountability for the satellite project. And where is the money for such satellites coming from? From the British tax-payer or from Iran via Israel, the Contras and Lieutenant Colonel North?

C. Donnison, London N4
If any evidence were needed of Neil Kinnock's incapacity to bring about British nuclear disarmament and to implement a radical freedom of information policy it must surely be his criticism of Margaret Thatcher for *failing* to prevent the publication of the *NS* article about the satellite.

Kinnock's unashamed defence of the latest plaything of our bloated parasitic military-industrial complex and his call to keep us all ignorant of it are the acts of a man incapable of recognising, let alone challenging, the fundamental inequalities that underpin this country's decline and for whom respectability, not radicalism, is the goal.

Rural tactics

Naomi Mitchison, Argyll
In many rural constituencies, Labour supporters must consider tactical voting, especially when the Labour vote at earlier elections has been so low as to give no reasonable possibility of winning. This is so in Argyll; the Liberal candidate came out second on the last poll and would certainly have beaten the Tory on any kind of PR.

Her main rival is the SNP candidate. Almost everyone in Scotland wants devolution, an effective Scottish Assembly and civil service, but there are other equally important issues and the Liberals certainly stand for devolution. Here we only hope that both Labour and SNP supporters will realise that, whatever they might prefer, their best way to get the Conservatives out is — in this constituency — to vote Liberal.

A vision of the modern city

John Corpe & David Dunster, Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning, University College London
Frances Morrell's analysis of the fashion industry (*NS* 23 Jan.) does not equate with her fond but unsatisfactory analysis of architecture and planning. The obvious reason is that the life-spans of the products of the fashion industry and of the building industry are completely different.

When the high-rise towers were constructed, they were the political agenda dominating any idea of a cultural issue. The users of these blocks might have temporarily found them satisfying because their previous accommodation lacked central heating and proper services. As the rest of society not in tower blocks acquired modern services, the shortcomings of these blocks were all too apparent, and the blocks became hated. The political agenda which demanded half a million homes per year, which could only be achieved by experimental building techniques, was a temporary phenomenon; the buildings linger on and, unlike old clothes, cannot be sent to the Oxfam shop.

The expectation that these buildings, or any others built in the post-war boom, should stand long after the political agenda had changed was not voiced. The padded shoulders of Joan Collins may have less long-term effect than the spacious white interiors against which these celebrated bones are photographed.

To extend the discussion, as Morrell does into calling for a Labour aesthetic, ties culture to the political agenda as if it could never exist without it. We can agree that Labour does need 'a vision

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of the modern city' but that it should be subservient to Labour's vision of a modern economy is not an assertion that can be taken on trust. It must be debated.

Buchan's ministry

Ken Worpole, London N16
The unsigned piece about Norman Buchan (*NS* 23 Jan.) contrives to make Buchan's claim for broadcasting to be wholly incorporated into a revamped Ministry of Arts and Media appear power-crazed and irresponsible. If this is so, then the Labour Party is less radical than either the Liberal Party or the SDP, both of which have published policy statements arguing the same case as Norman Buchan — and proposing them as policy.

Leaving regulation in the hands of the Home Office means leaving it in the hands of the very same department which last week authorised an inexcusable raid on the *New Statesman* offices, and the home of three of your journalists.

Donald MacLeod, Red Review, Glasgow
We were appalled to read the unsigned and outrageous character assassination of Norman Buchan. We take grave exception to the statement that Norman Buchan is a 'fuddy duddy' and out of touch with young ideas in the arts. As a young amateur group, who spend a lot of time raising money for the Labour Party, we have had nothing but help, support and encouragement from Norman Buchan. It is sad that Norman Buchan has been sacked for advocating Labour Party policy on broadcasting. It is even sadder that the *New Statesman* cheapens itself by printing an unsigned character assassination of one of the best supporters of the arts in Britain.

Questionable capitalism

Godfrey Hodgson, Oxford
I don't know whether Peregrine Worsthorne intends to imply that I am 'anti-capitalist' (Letters 23 Jan.). While I cannot deny that I am quite opposed to the activities of some capitalists, for example in the City, I am greatly in favour of others. Being 'anti-capitalist' is about as rational as being 'anti-realist'. We live in a capitalist world: on balance capitalism has brought us great benefits, but that is not a reason to suspend criticism or the search for improvement.

What is of more general interest is that, like many of those who run our newspapers, he is willing to smear as 'anti-American' or 'anti-capitalist' anyone who dares to make realistic observations about the Emperor/President's new clothes.

Owen ill served

Tony Price, London SW5
I struggle to understand why Jonathan Cutbill's article on Wilfred Owen's homosexuality (*NS* 16 Jan.) so nauseates me. I doubt that his insufferable smugness about his knowledge of Owen's gay world accounts for it — nor the ceaseless proselytising for 'gayness' (his term). It has to be a poet of Owen's quality being imagined as sucking off among corpses. Mr Cutbill ill serves his cause of gayness and Owen's cause of poetry.

Celtic divide

Ian Williams, Celtic League, Cornwall
And yet again that North-South divide. It seems to me that it's only when England starts to feel the pinch that any divide is noticed at all — conveniently forgetting that the so-called Celtic fringe has been getting flu each time England catches a cold from time immemorial.

Terminology

Cllr. Alison Higgs, Chair, Health and Consumer Services Committee, Lambeth Council
As a Lambeth Councillor I am obviously keen to challenge those who try to make a mockery of our policies. But I am equally disturbed when so-called socialists refuse to challenge the use of terms like 'loony' and bandy about — as in your headline (*NS* 9 Jan.) — words like 'madness' and 'delusion' as if mental health was a big joke for all of 'us'.

No doubt *New Statesman* would never dream of printing any openly racist or sexist terms of abuse. Why, then, is it still acceptable for you to give 'socialist' acceptability to those who think mental health is a big joke?

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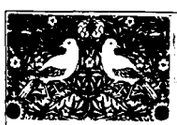

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MON 9 FEB

BENEATH THE WHITE COAT. A seminar series on Science & Politics in the 1980s organised by the British Society for the Social Responsibility in Science. The Marquis of Granby, Chandos Place, WC2. This week: David Albury "Post Modernism in Science".

SAT 14 FEB

Scottish **ONE WORLD CONFERENCE** 10 a.m.-4.30 p.m. Banqueting Suite, City Chambers, George Square, Glasgow. Disabled access Cochrane Street. Speakers include: **Glenys Kinnock, Joan Ruddock, Joan Lestor, Janey Buchan MEP,** and **Brian Wilson.** All are welcome to discuss the key **ONE WORLD** issues, and their meaning for the Labour Party. Write: **Janey Buchan, 72 Peel Street, Glasgow G11 5LR** or ring **One World 01-240 0625.**

THURS 19 FEB

TONY CROSLAND MEMORIAL LECTURE

7.30 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1.

19 February 1987 is **10th Anniversary** of **Tony Crosland's death** and the Fabian Society will mark the occasion by holding a Memorial Lecture to be given by **JOHN LLOYD** *Editor* of the *New Statesman* entitled:

'THE FUTURE of SOCIALISM'

Susan Crosland will also speak. Chair: **Austin Mitchell. Adm. £1.** To order tickets in advance send cheque payable to: **Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1H 9BN. 01-222 8877.**

COURSES

AFRICA— COURSES & DAY SCHOOLS
ILEA & Institute for African Alternatives 6 week Courses
Political Economy, Development, History.
Day Schools—**South Africa & One Party States in Africa.**
Starting: **25 February** apply: **ILEA, Chequer Centre, Chequer St, London EC1. Phone 01-388 6048.**

CONFERENCE

TELEVISION & THE FAMILY: A New Agenda. 25/26 February. Conference at Institute of Education, London. Contact: Janet Willis, BFI on 01-437 4355 for details.

WED 28 FEB

OXFORD CENTRE for African Studies **'Forced Labour and Migration in Africa'** 10 a.m. at **Nuffield College, Oxford.** Enquiries: History Workshop Centre, Ruskin College, Oxford OX1 2HE, tel. 0865 515345.

WED 4 MAR

HOUSING & PLANNING POLICIES: Their Effect on Women. Venue: Sheffield. One day event involving workshops on housing, retailing, transportation. £5/£10 with proceedings. Contact: Dorothy Reeves (0742) 731650.

FORTHCOMING

LEGAL SERVICES: a Socialist Alternative For Lawyers and Non-Lawyers. Conference at University of Leicestershire Weekend 4/5 April 1987. Accommodation available. Application forms from: Pauline Hendry, 74 Windsor Road, London E7.

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BACKCHAT

FIRST PERSON

Turbulent priests

Roz Kaveney

PESTILENCE WAS ALWAYS the Horseman you had trouble remembering when they came up in Trivial Pursuits, but every great star makes a comeback in the end. When we heard about Aids, some of us shuddered and some of us wept; elsewhere, however, there were cheery smiles.

For months there has been something unlovely in the air, a sound like a jagged thumbnail on a blackboard, the sound of ideological axes being ground. Christians and the right Right have a new sales pitch for ideas that had been mouldering on the shelves. And anything that sells the stuff must have been, well, heaven-sent.

Most of us were politely brought up and learned when young not to mock embarrassing personal defects. Some of our friends were still Christians, or had gone back to the habit, poor lambs. But we pretended we did not notice them praying for us and nodded politely when they said apologetically that some bishops some of the time said more or less acceptable things about politics. *What* we bit our tongues rather than say was that, if a man fails to convince us in his paid professional capacity of explainer of existence, we will not give weight to his more amateur judgments about interest rates or what we prefer to do in bed. And we've learnt again that politeness is pointless when dealing with those who want no deal, or have been offered a better one.

One might think that those passionately dedicated to the Passion and Redemption as the crucial events of history might be loath to sell themselves intellectually to those who regard them as a handy part of an apparatus of social order; but, apparently, not. And, while the Ferdinand Mounts and Paul Johnsons peddle an imaginary version of the family as if it were snakeoil, bishops wander round in their wake being intellectually disreputable. Archbishop Habgood remarked to the *Daily Mail* that while, as a theologian, he rejected the view that Aids was the wrath of God, it might, for some individuals, be a source of spiritual grace to believe it was. Theologically this is a bit iffy, recommending spiritual gymnastics that risk the sins alike of Presumption and Despair; more importantly, it ignores that for many it would be as relevant to suggest belief in having offended the Easter Bunny or Tooth Fairy. Montefiore and the Board of Social Responsibility come out with attempts to conflate theology and half-understood sociobiology: 'Unchastity is contrary to the natural law and it is therefore not surprising that human bodies are often ill-adapted to it.' Thomist natural law theology is unassailable if left to deal in circular assertions; to bring in the real world is to blow it wide open because it then has to deal with evidence such as the low health risks of lesbianism, traditionally condemned. And then there was a bevy of bishops on C4 news solemnly discussing the claims to prophethood of that unrepentant bully, sneak and popinjay, the Blessed James.

They are getting away unchallenged with their equation of the negative buzzword 'promiscuity' with any sexual pattern not of lifelong monogamy. This will not wash. Most of us no longer choose to pretend that one single one of those we love and fancy is the sole goal of our life, unless they happen to be so. If raging syphillis and the fear of Hell did not before lead to the universal practice of monogamy, it is unlikely that the mere threat of death will change the numbers — not vast, but more than one —of our commitments. What it can and should change is the expression of those loves; as the Government Health Warnings avoid mentioning, save in the matter of condoms, there *are* alternatives. And while the use of, say, disposable rubber gloves and the milder forms of bondage may not be dignified, well, sex was always silly fun as well as ecstasy. But somehow I don't think the Princes of the Church will be content with our not exchanging body fluids; they'd much rather we didn't do it at all. Tough.

The issue is not only — I refuse to say merely — our sexual freedom. It is no help during an outbreak of food poisoning to adopt the dietary code of Leviticus; the dogmas of cults muddy health issues. The atmosphere of hypocrisy creates imaginary press stories of prostitutes spreading disease as revenge (and press *avoidance* of stories of punters demanding unsafe sex at knifepoint). It leads to pharisaical objections to the siting of hospices; it is all too likely to encourage the Church's Rightwing friends in skimping health aid to Africa, where the devestation of pestilence will be worst.

But the bishops have souls to save. We have neglected at our own peril, and those of millions of others, the aggressive pursuit of truth and the mocking of base superstition. It is not a mistake I shall make again. □

WINE

When in Rhône

Stephen Brook

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO red Hermitage was as celebrated a wine as Ch. Lafite. It remains among the world's greatest red wines, as does another northern Rhône *appellation*, Côte Rotie. Even though, at around £10 a bottle, Côte Rotie and Hermitage are (relatively) underpriced, I shall put these splendid wines to one side and concentrate on the lesser, and less expensive, wines of the region.

They are all united by a single factor: only one grape variety, Syrah, is permitted. The aroma of well-made Syrah is irresistible: rich and smoky, sometimes smelling of violets or crushed petals, it often has a tarriness that promises wine of concentrated and complex flavour. Syrah makes full-bodied wines, packed with tarry, peppery fruit and often quite high in alcohol. Some less well-made wines can be anonymous in character, without the aroma and fruit and pungency I expect from good northern Rhône.

There are two *appellations* which produce good, reasonably priced wines: Crozes-Hermitage and St Joseph. There used to be a third, Cornas, that produced the inkiest and least penetrable of northern Rhônes. Unfortunately, local producers as well as wine fanciers have recently noticed that top-quality Cornas can be absolutely magnificent. Prices of currently available vintages are now around £10, though you may still find bottles of the 1982 Jaboulet Cornas for around £6 and should snap them up.

It is widely stated that Crozes-Hermitage is finer than St Joseph. I'm not sure. Crozes is leaner and

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has rather more elegance, but good St Joseph has a plump, rich fruitiness that can be sumptuously satisfying. While Hermitage can age for ten or 20 years, its lesser cousins should be drunk at between four and eight years. Much depends on the vintage. The best 1983s are still youthful, whereas the 1982s are fully ready to drink. 1984 is a lighter vintage but of good quality, far better in the northern Rhône than in Bordeaux. The 1985, which has only just begun to arrive in Britain, is a very fine vintage, though too young to drink.

I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the many Crozes I tasted. Only one showed poorly and, since it comes from a top producer, I suspect it was a duff bottle. Even inexpensive wines from co-operatives were attractive. If you are not sure whether you like the taste of Syrah, try Safeway's Crozes (£3.65). Although still fairly closed, the bouquet is lovely and the wine is chewy and has good depth of flavour; it certainly does smell and taste of Syrah and is good value. The cheapest Crozes, from Sainsbury at £2.65, is rather light, though well made and pleasant enough; I think it's worth spending a bit more. The 1984 De Vallouit (Oddbins, £4.29) is extremely promising on the nose, intense and minty, but seemed rather leisurely on the palate. I much preferred the 1983 Cave des Clairmonts (Waitrose, £3.75), utterly characteristic of Syrah in smell and flavour and with a degree of finesse that one doesn't always find in Crozes.

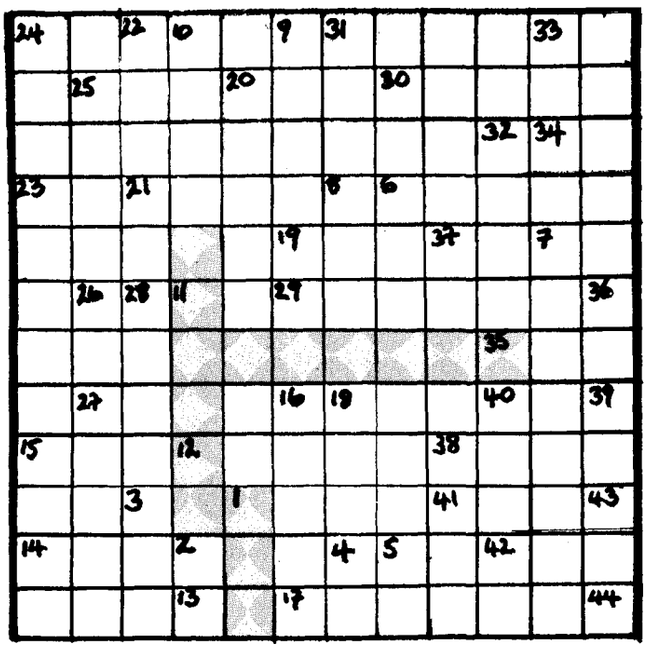
The best known proprietor in the northern Rhône is Paul Jaboulet, and their widely available wines rarely disappoint. Their 1983 Hermitage La Chapelle now sells for around £30 a bottle: a ridiculous price, especially when you consider that their finest Crozes costs a fifth of the price. The current vintage of the basic Jaboulet Crozes, the 1984 (Majestic, £3.99), is intense and fruity, yet somewhat high-toned and astringent; it has good acidity and may taste better in a year or so. The Crozes Domaine de Thalabert from Jaboulet (Majestic, £5.95) is quite a different matter: spicy and elegant on the nose and quite formidable and tannic on the palate. Definitely a wine to leave for two years, by which time it should lose its present austerity and turn into a splendid bottle. Thalabert is one of the few Crozes that can age very well; the 1978, if anyone can afford it (La Vigneronne, £15), is marvellous.

Jaboulet also make delicious St Joseph under the name Le Grand Pompée. The 1983 is promising but not ready to drink, unlike the 1982 (Victoria, £4.99), which has a lovely nutmeg nose and, while rich and opulent in the mouth, is yet remarkably elegant. Other St Josephs such as the 1983 Paret (Dominic, £4.95) and the 1982 Safeway (£4.49) have good Syrah character and are full-bodied, firm wines that don't quite achieve the stylishness of Le Grand Pompée. A lighter style comes from de Vallouit (Oddbins, £4.39) and there's a curious 1982 from La Cigalière (Unwin, £4.85): very deep in colour and soft, sweet and juicy in the mouth. These characteristics are shared by La Cigalière's 1985 Crozes (Unwin, £3.65) and I suspect carbonic maceration has been employed, a winemaking process that extracts colour and fruit from the grapes at the expense of tannin and other constituents that delay the wine's

Salamanca 117

'Detective-work'

PRIZE: £35 cheque for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Salamanca 117, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 2 March.



The chain of answers to clues, each answer beginning in its numbered square and with the last one or two letters of the previous word, winds its way through the grid bending through adjacent squares up, down, back and forth, but never diagonally. The shaded areas provide the source of the quotation which begins at 9, runs round the perimeter and finishes down on the inside at 1. Solvers should consult the source to find what is referred to by the quotation, then study the grid for it (across). Its discovery leads to a generally downward-winding message (4,3,7) whose instruction solvers should obey. Letters needed to complete the grid tell us HE IS LONG.

Name_____

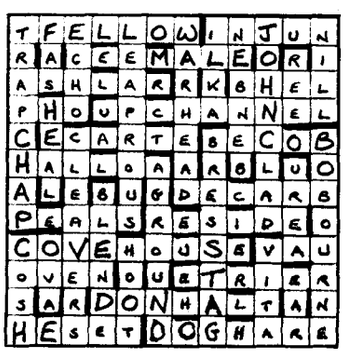
Address_____

_____

CLUES

1 Time you needed for wash to remove unwanted dirt (3)
2 Are agitated, feeling guilty in extremes, _____? (4)
3 This could be ghastly if slightest trace of revisit is left? (7)
4 Jewish community that finds settling hard to do (not daring, wandering) (6)
5 Hung about, mostly idly perhaps, without energy mostly, perhaps? (8)
6 The bad one would sin? (5)
7 Drink, long one, made fizzy (8)
8 *This*, if one which goes upwards, is not hard (5)
9 Old plant plucked by late travellers (5)
10 Visitor, say, leading royal, one entering cells on return (7)
11 Here a rough shout arises? (5)
12 They look and sound as if they're on your side (4)
13 Put on trainers, say, so he'd run better (5)
14 End of want King suppressed (5)
15 He may offer accommodation on the Loire? (8)
16 What you have if spelling 'fright' missing the t? (5)
17 Window, very big, framed by group (6)
18 Tea and coffee revived a company that's _____? (6)
19 Opinion held even in the tightest extremes (5)
20 Fashionable in a range that's not so big (6)
21 This chap's at first not old at heart (6)
22 Whence come airy blasts — wester, blowing? (6)
23 This is turned bad when cold and wet (4)
24 Plant found in odd places along route (3)
25 One's to join league, right? Perhaps _____? (5)
26 Needing these, you haven't cut odd lectures? (5)
27 Ruined by your own actions? You should use soft sell (8)
28 Furnish band with liquor (4)
29 See Head (Rex) on platform (7)
30 This stalag had chief incarcerated (4)
31 Where Bond *always* scored a hit? (That's difficult as well) (8)
32 Sailing-vessel: who'd steer it? (4)
33 Was hot and bothered in any event (6)
34 The Sun-god landing? (6)
35 Beast pirate liked caged (5)
36 Fey gal I've seen? (6)
37 Could be an old woman in very direst extremes (7)
38 Character of sound heart wanting responsibility (5)
39 Low-churchman having part as quasi-minister (3)
40 Anchor that requires turning space (4)
41 Small jumper needing endless space (3)
42 Uncles doomster imprisoned (4)
43 Native of Sweden, drunk (3)
44 From number, right, this starts in this direction? (5)

Solution to Salamanca 116



Theme: A Man For All Seasons. Spring, Summer, Autumn/Fall, Winter in words are replaced by words meaning man. Misprints read (in reverse) Robert Bolt.

Prizewinner to Salamanca 116

Patricia Jewell
(Tunbridge Wells, Kent)

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development but prolong its life. The La Cigalière wines are certainly enjoyable, but hardly typical of their *appellations*. Fortunately there is a good choice of more characteristic wines available at fair prices.

It may be of interest to readers to know that the following major retailers do not stock South African wines: Safeway, Oddbins and Sainsbury. The following do stock them: Thresher, Peter Dominic, Unwin, Waitrose and Victoria. Roberts & Cooper have 'limited distribution' of South African wines and Majestic carry what they describe as 'minute stocks', which are not regularly listed. □

Weekend competition

No 2961 **Set by Noel Petty**

How about an extract from a Special Branch report interpreting the Comp file discovered while searching the *NS* offices? Max. 120 words by 18 February, please.

No 2958 **Set by George Cowley**

Famous (mis)quotations.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

Thank you, Little Christmas, for your speedy response to Gray Dorn's not *entirely* gracious request for competition suggestions. We've chosen (see above) the most topical among them, but the others are sure to come in handy. A little tut-tut, however, to Tony (it's all right dear, I won't mention your surname) for sending his entry on specially good paper in case we 'might have to eat it'. The police we had here weren't the *hoi polloice*, Tony: the ones who kick pickets when they've got them on the ground. After all, as you yourself remark, when you came to deliver your entry by hand you noticed that some of them were reading the *Guardian*. (All right, they were reading it upside down, but sometimes that's the only way.) And I can't believe they *really* asked you if the Comp prize was paid out in roubles.

No, our recent cohabitees must have been a special branch of Special Branch: the *sweetest* collection of boys and girls, with wonderful manners and nice clean hands and a touching tendency to sit in a huddle on the stairs leading up to the boardroom (behind whose doors yet others were decoding 41 years of This England submissions) like children forbidden to join the adults downstairs. And my, how tidy the poppets were! The Art Editor's picture files make more sense now than they've done for a decade: Hattersley's back in 'Politicians/H' instead of 'Politicians/A'; Edward Heath's no longer mixed up with Joe Loss and Henry Mancini . . . But enough of this. To your famous (mis)quotations. These *weren't* up to last week's standard, I'm afraid, but £2 per valiant attempt below and a big, big sorry to anyone whose entry, though the same as a winner, didn't win: life's just terribly unfair.

He who is lost hesitates.
MRS J. MARTIN

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a man in single possession of a wife must be in want of a good fortune.
NOEL PETTY

There is no new thing in the *Sun*.
KATIE MALLETT

Private faces in pubic places
Are wiser and nicer
Than private faeces in public places.

Thou shalt not omit adultery.
BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

They're guarding the change at Buckingham Palace.
GERARD BENSON

The mass of men lead wives to quiet desperation.
GEORGE MOOR

The hand that cradles the rocks rules the world.
CYNTHIA HALL

The workers have nothing to lose but their videos, company pension schemes, mortgages, Mediterranean holidays and private shares.
BRIAN RUTH

Therefore, I am . . . I think.
KEN RUDGE

One man's 'meat' is another man's 'person'.

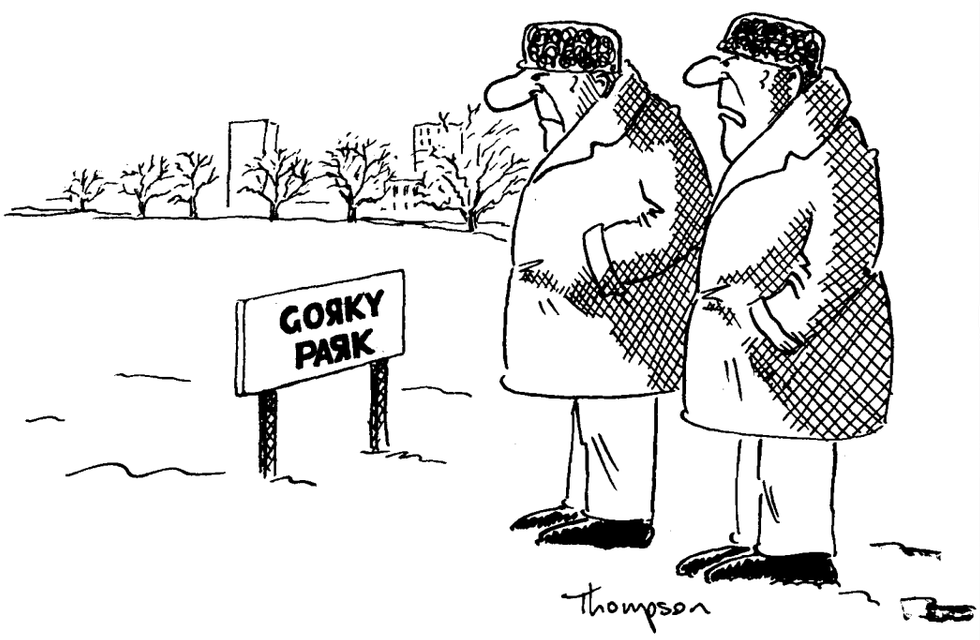
Beware the enema within!
MARGARET ROGERS

Where there's money there's muck.
JOHN MARRIOTT

L'enfer, c'est les auteurs.
TIM TURNER

I saw; I conquered; I came.
WATSON WEEKS

The fuck stops here.
STEVE ROGERS



"I preferred the book."

SPECIAL BOOK NUMBERS 1987

This year we are planning the following special issues:

SPRING BOOKS	**27 March**
SCIENCE BOOKS	**29 May**
POETRY	**4 September**
AUTUMN BOOKS	**25 September**
HISTORY	**30 October**
CHRISTMAS BOOKS	**27 November**

POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS will also be featured throughout 1987, starting on **27 February**.

Plus a special bumper issue on **The future of socialism** on **6 March:**

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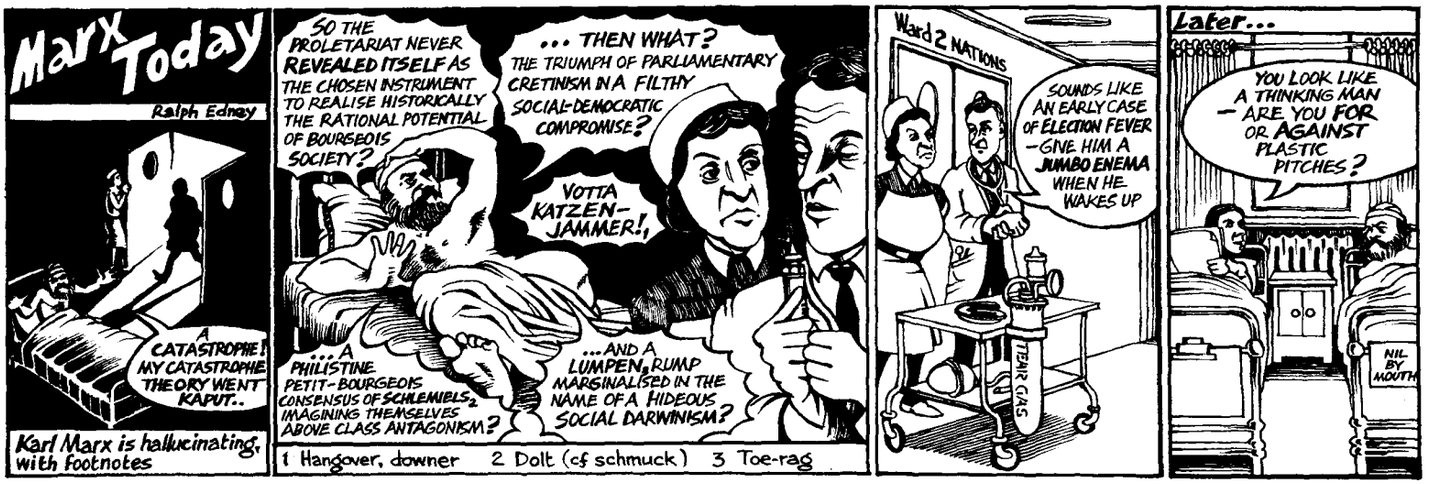

Marx Today
Ralph Edney
A CATASTROPHE! MY CATASTROPHE THEORY WENT KAPUT..
Karl Marx is hallucinating, with footnotes
SO THE PROLETARIAT NEVER REVEALED ITSELF AS THE CHOSEN INSTRUMENT TO REALISE HISTORICALLY THE RATIONAL POTENTIAL OF BOURGEOIS SOCIETY?
... THEN WHAT? THE TRIUMPH OF PARLIAMENTARY CRETINISM IN A FILTHY SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC COMPROMISE?
VOTTA KATZEN-JAMMER!,
A PHILISTINE PETIT-BOURGEOIS CONSENSUS OF SCHLEMIELS, IMAGINING THEMSELVES ABOVE CLASS ANTAGONISM?
...AND A LUMPEN, RUMP MARGINALISED IN THE NAME OF A HIDEOUS SOCIAL DARWINISM?
1 Hangover, downer 2 Dolt (cf schmuck) 3 Toe-rag
Ward 2 NATIONS
SOUNDS LIKE AN EARLY CASE OF ELECTION FEVER - GIVE HIM A JUMBO ENEMA WHEN HE WAKES UP
TEAR GAS
Later...
YOU LOOK LIKE A THINKING MAN - ARE YOU FOR OR AGAINST PLASTIC PITCHES?
NIL BY MOUTH

Chess

WHAT IT IS seemly for a sporting winner to do depends upon the competitive structure of the event. Nobody minds if someone who has just come in with the lowest score in a golf tournament punches the air or dances a jig. Exultant celebration is OK in that sort of large-field competition because it does not amount to glorying in the defeat of any particular rival. A smiliar performance coming from a victor in one-to-one matchplay would be more than a little distasteful. Team-events allow plenty of scope for whooping it up, since that can pass for a form of mutual congratulation between colleagues.

After beating Kasparov in the OHRA tournament Nigel Short phoned the offices of the British Chess Federation's *News flash* magazine. 'Of course, I was really delighted about the result,' he said. 'I felt like going berserk.' Naturally, he wouldn't let it show at the time. Ostentatious joy would always be a form of insult to the loser, so you bottle it up and start to commiserate about the mistake that cost the game.

The standard of competition in tournament chess is so fierce nowadays that not even a Capablanca could aspire to invincibility. So coping with defeat is an important factor in shaping a player's game-strategy. There used to be a sort of conventional wisdom among leading GMs that after a loss the right thing to do in the next round was to play as solidly as possible, keeping the draw in hand. Regaining one's psychological balance is the first priority. However, there are two serious disadvantages to this policy, one general, the other personal. It tends to produce boring, unadventurous games, and it does nothing to help the player recover the point lost.

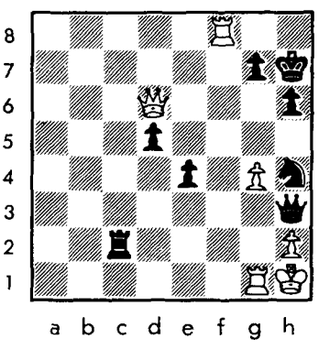
On the British tournament circuit the Leigh Grand Prix encourages a more positive approach. It carries a first prize of £3,000 which is, in theory at least, open to anyone — provided you can pack your bags any weekend and travel to wherever the action is. In chasing the top prize it doesn't matter if you spread a bit of restrained happiness around the country by losing games, so long as you can post enough high-scoring tournament results. Winner of the 1986 Grand Prix, with 192.3 out of a possible maximum of 200 points, was Jim Plaskett. Nobody has a more positive attitude than Plaskett. To describe his style, choose between 'heroic' and 'reckless'.

Perhaps you can get away with do-or-die stuff in weekend Swiss tournaments. But surely it is a recipe for disaster in a tournament of GMs? So it seemed at Hastings. Plaskett lost to Chandler in the first round, and found himself on the receiving end of a straightforward plan in round 2:

Lputian-Plaskett, Hastings 1986-87. Nimzo/Queen's Indian.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6. 3. Nf3 b6 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. Bg5 Bb7 6. e3 h6 7. Bh4 g5. 8. Bg3 Ne4 9. Nd2 Bxc3 Black has to face an attack after 9 . . . Nxc3 10. bxc3 Bxc3 11. Rc1 Bb4 12. h4 and defending isn't Jim's favourite game. **10. bxc3 Nxg3 11. fxg3** So the plan is to be active down the f-file. **Qe7 12. e4 d6 13. Bd3 Nd7 14. Qa4 0-0 15. 0-0 Nf6 16. Qd1 e5? 17. Qf3 Kg7 18. Rf2 Bc8 19. Nf1 Ng4 20. Re2 c5 21. h3 Nf6 22. g4! cxd4?** According to Lputian Black ought to try 22 . . . h5 23. gxh5 g4. **23. cxd4 exd4 24. e5 dxe5 25. Ng3! Bd7 26. Rf1 Nh7 27. Nh5 + Kh8 28. Bxh7 Kxh7 29. Qf6!** Simply winning a piece. **Qxf6 30. Nxf6 + Kg7 31. Nxd7 Rfe8 32. Rxe5 d3 33. Ref5 Re7 34. Ne5 d2 35. Rxf7 + Rxf7 36. Rxf7 + Kg8 37. Rf1 1-0.**

A self-explanatory game: White opens the f-file, Black helps by weakening f5 and is powerless against the exploitation. Considered from the loser's point of view a thematic demonstration like this is not so appealing. Others might start to play more cautiously, but Plaskett ploughs on unabashed. Round 9 finds him donating a piece to Chiburdanidze inside 10 moves for the phantom of an attack. So finally he learns his lesson and makes some safe draws? No! He wins his next 3 games on the trot to finish with a respectable 7/13, a place in the prize-list, and a net gain of Elo points!

Problem
Another episode from the Foreign & Colonial Hastings tournament. In the diagram why was the apparently potent **40 . . . Nf3** a mistake, and what should Black have played?



Chandler-Lputian finished **40 . . . Nf3? 41. Rh8 +** and the players agreed a draw because of 41 . . . Kxh8 42. Qf8 + Kh7 43. Qf5 + Kg8 44. Qxd5 + Kf8 45. Qf5 + Ke7 46. Qxe4 + followed by Qxc2. Instead **40 . . . Rg2!** would have been crushing.

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed.
(Postcards please.)

☐ Sir Geoffrey said he would be urging the council to take action against the church members if they continue to create a nuisance in Hampstead High Street. 'There are many places where they could preach the work of God without disturbing people—and I'm quite sure God would support that point of view,' he added.—*Ham & High* (Daryn Moody)

☐ Holiday makers hoping for a taste of the past will also be able to sample its smell at a new tourist attraction. Businessman Stan Johnson has created a £1 million replica of a World War II prisoner-of-war camp at Malton, North Yorkshire. Generators will waft out smells of the era including diesel oil and battery acids for a U-boat scene.—*Daily Mirror* (G. M. Moger)

☐ BR Management have spent months trying to decide what to call their new classes on the railways. Among suggestions put forward were 'tourist' and 'economy'. 'Tourist' was ruled out, according to BR sources, because it was considered inappropriate for workers using trains in such holiday highspots as Glasgow or Barnsley. 'Economy' was scrapped in case of complaints about excessive fares from commuters. Last week BR announced fare rises of up to 10 per cent from January.—*Mail on Sunday* (Russell Holmes)

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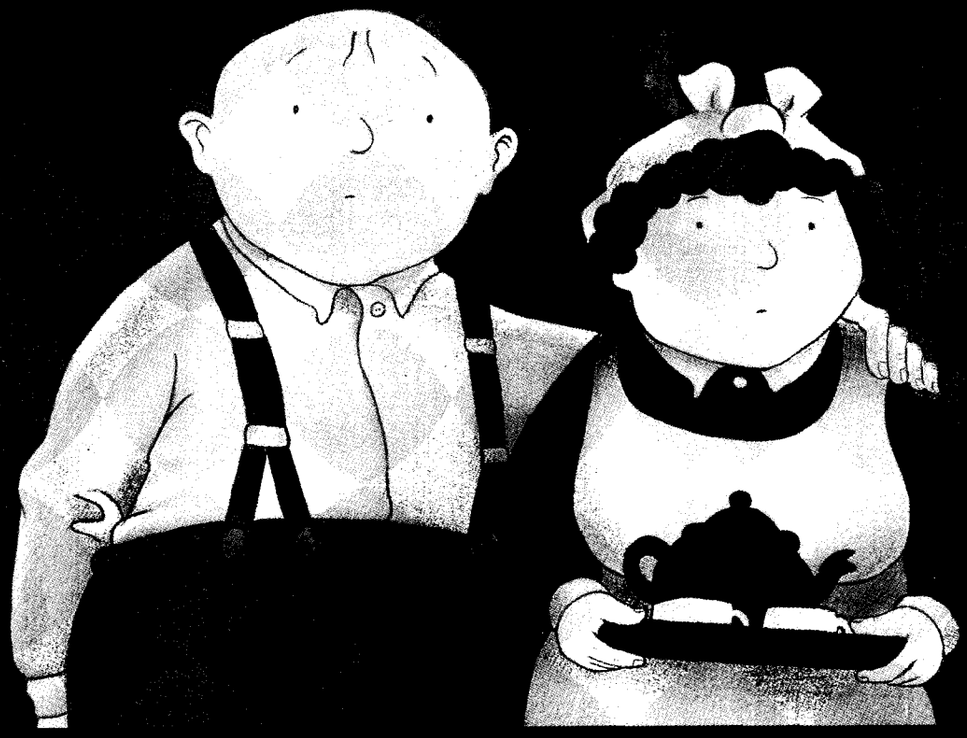

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